Interview with Richard W. Boehm

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR RICHARD W. BOEHM

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Today is June 27, 1994. This is an interview with Ambassador Richard W. Boehm, being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy.

Could we start by your giving me a bit about your background: when and where you were born and something about your family.

BOEHM: I'd be glad to. I was born in 1926 in Queens, NY, which was then thought of as a suburb but which, as you know, is part of New York City. My father was a printer who worked all of his life for Hearst Newspapers. My mother was a housewife.

So I grew up in what you may call a working class or middle class environment in New York City, in Queens. I went to school there.

Q: Where did you go to school?

BOEHM: I went to the New York City public schools for elementary and high school—Jamaica High School might mean something to some people. It's still there.

Then World War II came along. I joined the Army and ended up going overseas.

Q: You joined the Army without going to college?

BOEHM: That's right, after graduating from high school. I went into the service and ended up in Germany just before the end of World War II.

Q: What part of the Army did you end up in?

BOEHM: I ended up in an armored division. I got there before the war ended, but it was really too late to get into combat. So I occupied Germany for about a year and then left the service in 1946. Thanks to the GI Bill, I then went to college.

Q: Where did you go to college?

BOEHM: I went to Adelphi College, now Adelphi University. Adelphi had been a women's college, but then, when the war ended, they saw both the need and the opportunity to expand and take in veterans. So it became a coed college at that point. I think that mine was the second class after World War II to include men.

I took a year off in 1948 to go to France. I went over there for a summer program at Grenoble in southern France, in Provence. I found, when I got to Grenoble, that the only people there were foreign students. The French had all left for the summer. So I wasn't satisfied either with the state of my French at that point or with my experience in France. So I decided to stay on. I moved to Paris and signed up at the Sorbonne. I spent the year of 1948-1949 in France. I also did some traveling around in Europe.

Q: Was there any particular point to that? Were you working on your French?

BOEHM: I think that I may have had some remote idea of doing something with it, but it was primarily intellectual curiosity, I think. I wished to live over there and have a look at Europe, which I did. Then I returned to the United States in 1949, went back to Adelphi, and got my degree. I was married in the fall of 1949 while still in my senior year at Adelphi.

Q: What was your area of study?

BOEHM: I was an English major. My wife was also from Long Island, from Nassau County, if you know the area. From Rockville Center, in fact. So I graduated from college in June, 1950. By that time I was about to become a father and had to go to work.

Q: The GI Bill lasted just so long.

BOEHM: It did lots for me. I always appreciated it.

Q: We are now, in this month of June, 1994, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the GI Bill, to which I owe a graduate degree and also the house which I am living in.

BOEHM: I also bought a house. I bought it 15 years ago using the VA [Veterans' Administration] mortgage for the second time.

I wanted to do something with my education. I got a job with Prentice Hall Publishing Company in Manhattan at the same time that we bought a house in Levittown, which was the typical sort of veteran's thing that you did at the time. I liked the work at Prentice Hall. They started me out as a proof reader. Then, if you showed any flair at all as a proof reader, they made you an editor fairly quickly. I became an editor, primarily of textbooks. The only problem was that you couldn't live on what they paid. There were plenty of English majors coming out of college every year, and they didn't have to pay anything, so it was really a luxury, which I couldn't afford. So I had to leave there. By that time, my son had been born.

I went to work as a management trainee for an insurance company. So I was headed in precisely the opposite direction from where I wanted to go. I did that for a couple of years. It paid better and was enough to live on, though I wasn't terribly happy about it.

Q: What company was it?

BOEHM: Mutual Insurance Co. of New York. They were perfectly good employers. I am grateful to them for having kept me going for a few years. However, both my wife and I were dissatisfied with life in Levittown and with life in the insurance company.

So in the fall of 1953 I took the Foreign Service examination. At that time, as you will probably recall, it was given once a year and took a week to complete.

Q: I remember that I took the exam in 1953 or 1954, I think, and it took three and one-half days.

BOEHM: It may have been three and one-half days, but I seem to recall that it took four and one-half days. It seemed like four and one-half days. It was a long examination and took a certain amount of physical endurance. And then you waited to hear the results. In December, 1953, I learned that I had passed the examination. But of course, as you recall, that was only the beginning of the process. You then had to take an oral exam, a physical exam, and go through a security check. That whole process went on for another year.

It was in the summer of 1954 that I went down to Washington to take the oral exam. Again, being an old timer, I have to recall that everyone had to go to Washington to take the oral exam. There were no traveling examination panels, as there are now. The examining panel was made up of very senior officials who happened to be in Washington at the time. The panel which examined me included Raymond Hare, Gerald Drew, and the Inspector General at the time, Raymond Miller. There was one other member whose name I've forgotten.

Q: Cromwell Riches—was he the permanent member?

BOEHM: I don't think he was then. He may well have been a semi-permanent member. It was a rather intimidating panel. Since I didn't know that much about the Foreign Service or Foreign Service people, I wasn't quite as awe-struck as I should have been. [Laughter].

You went in and took the oral examination and then they said, “Go out and get a cup of coffee and come back in an hour.” And they told you then whether you'd passed or not.

It must have been a close thing with me. Gerald Drew, who was the chairman, saw me when I returned. He said, “You're in, but there were certain members of the board who felt that you weren't in very close touch with what is going on in foreign affairs.” This was quite true. I was living as a suburbanite and supporting a family. I wasn't all that much up to date. But he said, “I told them that this was the kind of thing that happened to people in your circumstances.” So they took me.

Then, of course, I had to take the physical and await the outcome of the security check. Then, as now, it took time. Eventually, in December, 1954, I was told that I had been appointed to the Foreign Service and could come down to Washington in January, 1955, and that I was going to be assigned to Washington. This came as a great disappointment to me. I was told that I was going to be assigned to what was then called the News Division, which speaks for itself, headed by a political appointee by the name of Henry Suydam. Henry Suydam had been, I think, editorial page editor of the Newark News. He was a fascinating man who, in 1917 or 1918, as a very young man just out of college, had become a newspaperman and had been sent to Russia. In fact, he was at the Finland Station [in St. Petersburg] when Lenin arrived from exile. He had then joined the State Department and started what was called the Division of Current Information. This later evolved into the News Division which he came back years later to head. So he was the spokesman [of the Department of State] and the head of the Division.

Q: Before we move on, what had moved you toward the Foreign Service?

BOEHM: That's a good question. Since I thought that you'd ask me that, I have been reflecting on it. It's a common question. People always ask that. I think that, from childhood, I'd always had an interest in far-off places. I liked globes and atlases and liked to pore over maps. I liked stories about different cultures and places. I think that that stays

with you. Then the experience of having gone overseas during World War II and having returned to France sort of fed my appetite for travel. Probably, it was more that than an interest in foreign affairs, although I had had some interest in foreign affairs. But that came very quickly. When you started working in the field of foreign affairs, you become absorbed by the idea of that kind of public service. But I can't claim that public service was my primary impulse. It was more a wish to go somewhere.

Q: How had you heard about the Foreign Service?

BOEHM: Well, that's also a good question. I really hadn't. I knew that we had embassies and diplomats, but I had no idea how one became a diplomat. Somebody suggested to me, “Why don't you apply for the Foreign Service?” I wrote the State Department and asked how you got into the Foreign Service. They sent me some information, and I filled out the application and took the examination. But it was not something that I really knew much about until I wrote and asked how you do it, unlike a number of colleagues who came from a different tradition, such as parents who had been in the Foreign Service and who knew about it. I was a kind of babe in the woods.

Q: I think that this is true of many of us of our generation. We had vaguely heard about it, the military grabbed us, and we had seen far off places. So we felt, “What the hell.”

BOEHM: Anyhow, to my delight I made it into the Foreign Service. Then, to my disappointment, I was assigned to Washington, which I hadn't expected. I expected to be sent overseas right away.

Q: Talk about your first job there [in the Department]. We're talking about the middle of the Eisenhower period.

BOEHM: The second half of the first Eisenhower term [1955]. John Foster Dulles was Secretary of State.

Q: And very much the Secretary of State. So what was your assignment in the Department?

BOEHM: I was assigned to the News Division. The News Division basically had two functions: to publicize foreign policy and to speak for the Secretary of State and the Department, informing the public about what was going on. The other function was to inform the Department of what the press and the media were saying.

My starting job in the News Division was, as I said, something of a shock to me. I was assigned to service the news tickers. At that time the news came in on tickers—big machines that printed out the news. There were five tickers there: the Associated Press had one; the United Press had one; the then International News Service, which later combined with the United Press, had one; Reuters News Agency had one; and there was an Agence France Presse (AFP) ticker.

My initial job was to clip these news reports out and then route them to the offices in the Department which needed them. There were multiple copies of these reports. If an item came out of Moscow, for example, one copy would go to the Secretary; one copy to the Under Secretary, then the title of the No. 2 man in the Department; one would go to the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs; and so forth. So that was what I was doing, basically. I was sort of a glorified office boy. I was pretty unhappy with that. I didn't like it at all.

Then they gave me more responsibility. They made me the liaison guy with the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs [NEA], which meant that I would sit in at the daily meetings held by the Public Affairs Office in NEA. Then, if questions came up during the day regarding Near Eastern events, I would be expected to know or find out about them—find out from the Bureau what could be said about them. So my job began to become more interesting.

Eventually, after more or less a year of doing that, I was moved into a sort of assistant spokesman position, and a new guy came in to take over cutting up the tickers. [Laughter] But I was eager to go overseas, and eventually the time came for me to be assigned.

Q: Before you go into that, you said you were "sort of an assistant spokesman." Could you describe, from your point of view, relations between the Department of State and the press in those days?

BOEHM: I'd say they were pretty good. There was a regular crew of reporters, as there is now, who covered the State Department. These included the wire services. Individual newspapers, such as the New York Times, had people permanently there at the Department. Some of them were reliable, trustworthy, and objective. Others were, perhaps, less so. You had those who would do almost anything to beat the other newspapers. They looked for something which the public generally knows as a scoop. They wanted to be the first reporters to learn of something. They would press you and pry. Occasionally—especially someone newly assigned—an officer would make a mistake and would be a little bit indiscreet. You'd read about it the next morning. So it could be a bit dicey at times. But I'd say that relations with the press were quite good. We had very high quality reporters covering the Department, including Pulitzer Prize winners, whose names wouldn't mean anything any more.

The Associated Press was represented by John Hightower, and the New York Times had Elie Abel there—a distinguished group. They were good people.

Q: Were there any matters which were particularly sensitive at that time? The Near East, for example? We weren't as involved with Israel at that point.

BOEHM: You would have incidents. Somebody would attack our Consulate General in Jerusalem, or that kind of thing. My recollection of it at the time was that it wasn't the constant, consuming issue that it became later on.

Q: I would have thought that at that time the more or less constant, consuming issue would have been more involved with Nasser and what was called Nasserism. He took over the Suez Canal shortly before you left.

BOEHM: I left in the summer of 1956.

Q: That was before the Suez Crisis, but that crisis was a long, drawn-out thing. Do you have any recollection of how people talked about Nasser?

BOEHM: None at all. I have no recollection of it whatsoever and very little recollection of events in the Middle East at that time. I don't recall a spectacular event of the kind I later encountered elsewhere. I was assigned to the News Division for a year and a half [January, 1955, to August, 1956]. I left there in the summer of 1956. I have no recollection of what was going on in the Near East. I suppose that if I did some research, I could refresh my memory.

Q: Well, no, I think that probably your recollection isn't that far off. Unless you were a real expert in that particular area or were watching these things. It wasn't really until after the Suez crisis that events started getting us really enmeshed in that area.

BOEHM: The big story during my first tour in Washington was the Cold War—U. S.-Soviet relations and Big Four meetings, which did or didn't take place. Our boss, Henry Suydam, of course, would go with the Secretary to Vienna or wherever for the Big Four meetings. That was the kind of thing that was going on. There were NATO issues. In general, the focus was on Europe. The Middle East was kind of a sideshow at that time.

Q: Then you moved off...

BOEHM: It was out of the frying pan and into the fire. I went to do six weeks at the FSI [Foreign Service Institute], the A-100 course, which I hadn't previously done. The system

then was that if you were going to be assigned to Washington, they held off on the A-100 course till later on.

Q: What was your impression of the A-100 course, which you took in 1956? What was your impression of your class, the type of people in it, and how you were trained?

BOEHM: Well, the fact that I'd already been on the job for a year and a half in the Department in Washington probably colored the way I regarded the A-100 course. You took only part of the A-100 course if your first tour had been in Washington. The part I took was primarily consular work, which was very useful to me. I thought that was good, although I felt a little bit above it all, having spent a year and a half in Washington. I knew that you had to take this course, so I took it.

I can recall a number of my classmates, who were a mixed lot. Some of them had not entered the Foreign Service through the examination route. The Wriston Program was going on at that time. I think I took a rather snobbish view of things in those days. I felt that anybody who hadn't come in by taking the three and one-half day exam wasn't quite up to snuff. It was a mixed group. I was just waiting to get through with it and get out of there. As you recall, the system was that during the last week or so someone would come in and give you your assignment—right there in the classroom and before everybody.

I was told that I was to go to [the Consulate General in] Melbourne, Australia. I really didn't want to go to Melbourne because, although I'd never been to Australia, I had the idea that Australia was probably pretty much like the United States. I wanted to go to some place different. So I appealed to somebody I knew in the Personnel Office and said, “Can't I get something else?” He said, “I'll see what I can do.” He came up with [the Consular Office in] Okinawa. This was, if anything, far less exotic than Australia, because it was a United States military base.

So I went there and spent two years in Naha. It was a mistake. I feel that I would have been much better off going to Australia, in a way, though not entirely. I'll get to Okinawa later. I want to tell one story about the Foreign Service, the Consular course.

Q: Oh, please.

BOEHM: At that time there was a Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs, headed by a very controversial guy named Scott McLeod, who was a prot#g#e of Senator Joseph McCarthy. This guy was a real, right wing nut. The principal, intellectual input in the A-100 course came from a man named Frank Auerbach, who was an expert on visas. He was the world's leading authority on visas. He'd written the book.

Q: He'd written the law and the book...

BOEHM: He came and lectured to us. He preached the lesson of objectivity, the law, and the applicant. You'd look at the applicant and you'd look at the law and then go by the book. He went on doing that for almost six weeks. Then along came Scott McLeod to address us toward the end of the [consular] course. He said, “I'll tell you how I view consular affairs. You take a look at the applicant. You ask yourself, 'Would I want to have this guy living next door to me?'” [Laughter] And Frank Auerbach was there! His face was a study.

At any rate, that was that. I went to Okinawa, again with misgivings, because it wasn't at all what I had in mind. I seemed to be going, really, in the wrong direction. The Consular Unit, as it was called, in Naha was a four-man post. Organizationally speaking, it was an interesting one.It was headed by a senior officer, at that time John Steeves, who later became Director General of the Foreign Service and Ambassador to Afghanistan. He had the title of Consul General, but his main hat was as Political Adviser to the Commanding General of what was called USARYUS/IX Corps, or United States Army, Ryukyu Islands - IX Corps. The commander was a three-star general. John Steeves was his Political

Adviser. That was the main function he had. There wasn't much consular activity. There was one upper middle grade officer who was his deputy, who more or less ran the Consulate. There were two junior vice consuls, of whom I was the more junior. We did everything else—the administration and the consular work. The number two guy, Steeves' deputy, was an economic type. It was great training, in fact—really, very good training. The senior vice consul had entered the Foreign Service through the back door. He had been a ship's radio operator earlier in his career. Then he had became sort of a consular clerk or communicator somewhere—I think in Australia. Then he made it and was commissioned a vice consul. He was a very salty old guy. However, he knew his business. He took it very seriously and taught me not only the consular business but administrative affairs as well. All of this, plus my experience [in the Department] as a press officer stood me in very good stead throughout my career. Even though, at the time, I was frustrated at being in Okinawa, I came to appreciate it and realized that it was a very useful experience.

Living in Okinawa was nothing much. You lived in a fenced-in area, a US military compound where a few houses were set aside for the people from the Consular Unit, as it was called. It was called the Consular Unit, because the United States was the administrative power in Okinawa, and you couldn't have a Consulate, as such. Technically, it was treated as a branch of the Consular Section of the Embassy in Tokyo, for consular purposes. There were several military compounds—some of them in one area, some in another. Life was kind of like Levittown with a fence around it. So that was a disappointment. We did our best and struggled along.

I got a chance to do something—I'm not sure what role it played in my career. Maybe none, except in my own mind. We had an inspection during my tour there. There were two inspectors. One of them was Ed Gullion, a well-known Foreign Service Officer and later an Ambassador. He eventually became the head of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Ed Gullion sat down with John Steeves, the Consul General, at the end of his inspection. He said, “We have a list here of political subjects on which there has been no reporting. You have this young vice consul. We think that it would

be a good idea if you and he, between you, would pick one of these subjects, turn him loose for a couple of weeks from his other responsibilities, and let him do it." John Steeves was a very fine guy and a very good developer of his staff. He said OK. The inspectors went their way and John called me in and said, "Let's look at this list."

The subject that attracted me was "Reversionist sentiment among the Okinawans." At the time Okinawa was being run by a military governor—not the commanding general to whom Steeves was an adviser, but a civil administrator, who was an Army officer. All of the civilian Americans living there worked for the military government. They had a notion that the Okinawans loved us so much that what they really wanted was to become the 51st State. However, there were a few people who believed that Okinawa should revert to Taiwan, because it had historic ties with China at one time or another. It had been an independent kingdom, and therewere some who wanted it to be an independent kingdom again. However, those with any sense realized that the Okinawans considered themselves Japanese. If they went anywhere, it would be to become a province of Japan.

I was asked to do a report on this. I did. I took two weeks off. I didn't have very many sources. I must admit also—and I might want to take this out of the transcript later—that I had a preconceived notion of what the answer should be, even before I began my research. The preconceived answer was that the Okinawans really wanted reversion to Japan. This probably also served US interests best, and I thought that we probably should start preparing for it. At that time we kept Japan very much at arms length in Okinawa. There was no official Japanese representation in Okinawa. When a Japanese ship came into the harbor, it couldn't fly the Japanese flag. We kept the Japanese away, which might have been a mistake. We should have begun to involve them and gotten them to pay some of the bills [for the Occupation]. I had these ideas before I began my research. So I can't say that it was entirely objective, although I think that the conclusions I reached were correct. I came up with this report, which concluded that reversion to Japan was the way to go.

Q: Method and process are always very interesting things. Here you were—obviously, you didn't speak Japanese, or certainly not the Okinawan dialect in Japanese. How did you go about this?

BOEHM: I went about it as best I could. I would say now, with the perspective of four decades later, that it was a very inadequate kind of research. But you talk to anybody you can lay hands on. There was a structure, a Ryukyuan government structure, with a governor, a mayor of Naha, various officials, and an Okinawan staff. I'm afraid that all too often we drew on our local staff for this kind of report. I tried to find Okinawans who would talk to me and I talked to Americans, as well, who had contacts, to see what they thought, looking to those who were as objective as you could find. So I put together what I could. I would say now that what I did was inadequate, in terms of research—although I think that the conclusions of the report were correct. Anyhow, I prepared the report. It was a bombshell. By the time the report was completed, John Steeves had moved on. He'd gone to become Political Adviser to CINCPAC [Commander in Chief, Pacific] in Hawaii.

But the American military command in Okinawa was outraged at this report. They wouldn't speak to me. I was shunned.

Q: Could you explain what the American military attitude was at that time?

BOEHM: They were convinced that we had to keep Okinawa. It was ours. They thought the Okinawans liked it that way, and the idea of more or less inviting Japan to start coming in and preparing eventually to take over was anathema to them. My report, by implication, rebutted their notion that the Okinawans loved us and wanted us to stay. A few of the military would come to me privately and say that it was a great report. They said that they couldn't say this publicly, but “You are absolutely right about what you said.” The official American military reaction was very bad.

It happened that just after the report came out, I went to a consular conference in Tokyo. At that time the Ambassador was Douglas MacArthur II.

Q: General Douglas MacArthur's nephew.

BOEHM: Yes. The DCM in Tokyo at that time was Outerbridge Horsey.

Q: Two very much establishment types.

BOEHM: Very establishment. Horsey gave a luncheon for the visiting consular officers, to which Ambassador MacArthur, of course, was invited. Since Horsey had a protocol problem of whom to put next to Ambassador MacArthur, he solved it by choosing the two most junior persons present to sit next to the Ambassador. I was one of them. Ambassador MacArthur turned to me and said, “That was a first rate report on the reversion of Okinawa. Congratulations.” I was stunned and thrilled. I doubt if he had actually read it. His staff probably drew it to his attention. It gave me a tremendous lift.

Q: Oh, I'm sure.

BOEHM: And I got a letter from John Steeves, congratulating me on the report which, he said, was being read with interest in Hawaii. Even though the local reaction in Okinawa among our military was very negative, the report got some attention and attracted interest elsewhere.

Q: I think that it was the first time we really started to look at this issue.

BOEHM: It did that. I would like to think that I made a decisive contribution to something. As we go along in this interview, I'll come to other points in my career where I felt that I did something that was crucial at the time that I did it. But I'm not at all sure that this was the case [with regard to Okinawan reversion]. It was something which was going to happen, either then or a little bit later, in any case.

Q: Anyway, it was a timely report.

BOEHM: It was. It took a little time before we started to negotiate with Japan and to hand Okinawa back to them, although we kept our bases there. It worked out all right. Okinawa is still chafing a little bit. I read in the press the other day that the Japanese governor has been in Washington, asking us to give back a lot of land which we now use on our bases. Okinawa is land-poor. So that kind of issue—the base presence—goes on. But that is something that we will negotiate with the Government of Japan.

Q: I had a call from Japanese Public TV earlier this year—not too long ago. They wanted to do something or talk to people about the reversion issue and all of that. I said, "You know, you don't have to talk to the Japanese authorities. If you want to get different views, talk to the Pentagon and the Department of State people at that time, because that's really where the conflict was."

BOEHM: They ought to talk to Dick Sneider, who was head of the Political Section [in the Embassy in Tokyo] a little later. It was he who, while in Japan, or perhaps back in Washington in some capacity, gave impetus to the negotiations which ended up in the reversion of Okinawa. Anyway, I'd like to think that I made some kind of a contribution. But the point was that, as a very junior officer, I was given the opportunity to prepare this report. It made a splash. It was a great lift for me.

Q: Oh, absolutely. Was there anything else in Okinawa? Who was Consul General after Steeves?

BOEHM: It was another very fine career Foreign Service Officer named Olcott Deming. He went from there to be Ambassador to Uganda or Malawi and then retired. His son is now, I think, a senior officer in the Foreign Service. I was lucky in my assignment to the Consulate in Okinawa. Both Steeves and Deming were very good guys. I was in Naha for two years [1956-1958].

Q: You left Naha in 1958.

BOEHM: It was a two year tour.

Q: Then where did you go?

BOEHM: I think that you could express a preference at that time. You could put down three choices which you wanted for your next assignment. I got one of mine—Germany. I forget what the other two were. Probably France was one of them, but I never was assigned to France, though I kept thinking that I would be.

To my surprise and my horror, and this showed me the impact of my famous report on Okinawan reversion and the effect it had on the assignment process, I was assigned as Assistant General Services Officer in Hamburg. I didn't know what to make of this assignment. That was by way of the German language school in Frankfurt, a three month course. It had just been cut back from a four month course.

I took my wife and children to Hamburg. I had two children by that time. I installed them in a house in Hamburg and went off to the language school in Frankfurt. I felt that I had better leave them in Hamburg, to get them settled, leaving me to concentrate entirely on German. That way I wouldn't be tempted to speak English all the time.

The language school then was headed by a very fine gentleman and a distinguished scholar of languages, named Fritz Frauchiger, an American, despite his very German name. Immediately before that he had been head of the French language school in Nice. He had had a traumatic experience there with Congressman John Rooney, who visited Nice and was displeased by what he thought was the life style of the students there. They were living in a very French style, having wine with their meals! Rooney didn't like this, although he had a taste for liquor. He arranged to have that school closed. Frauchiger was very much intimidated by the experience and was running the German school very

carefully. We had to account in writing for every minute of the day. I thought that this was ridiculous, but I spent three months there.

The school was very good. You learned German, if you had any aptitude for languages. You learned good, solid, basic German in the three months. At the end of the school program, they asked us for recommendations on the school itself. My recommendation, which wasn't followed but which I still think was a very good one, was to get rid of the school and place the people assigned to the school with families in German university towns for the three months. Just let them learn German that way. It would have been a whole lot cheaper. The school was closed eventually. The reason given was that it was more cost effective to do the training in Washington, which is nonsense. It would have been even more cost effective to put people out among German families in university towns. But my idea was not taken seriously.

While I was at the language school, I was promoted. At that time it was felt that your assignment should roughly reflect your grade, which, I think, ceased to be the case later on. So I could no longer be Assistant General Services Officer in Hamburg. Instead, I was to be sent to the Economic Section of the Mission in Berlin. What a stroke of luck that was! So I called my wife with the good news of my promotion. The day I called her she had just finished unpacking and installing us in the house in Hamburg. I also told her that we'd be going to Berlin. Her joy was less than unrestrained because she'd been through this really difficult period by herself, not speaking any German, settling into Hamburg. She had finally completed the process, only to be told the very day that she'd unpacked everything that we were going to move to Berlin, which we did. She came to love Berlin, as we all did. It was a great experience.

Q: Could you describe the situation in Berlin when you arrived, which would be in 1959?

BOEHM: Well, I'll go back a little bit further because you need to know the background. I started the [German] language school at the very end of December, 1958, or the beginning

of January, 1959. This meant that I went up to Berlin in April, 1959. At that time, of course, the United States and its two Western allies, Britain and France, were regularly facing off with the Russians and their East German pawns about the status of Berlin, the rights the Western allies had in East Berlin, and the question of access—the autobahn and the air corridors. The question was to what extent we could accept East German or, for that matter, Russian, control of our movements either within Berlin or to and from Berlin from the West. The tension was greatly enhanced when Khrushchev, in late 1958, demanded that the Western Allies get out of Berlin in six months. He said that the Russians were going to turnover control of Berlin to the East Germans and end the Occupation. This was a virtual ultimatum.

It was under those circumstances, shortly before the ultimatum was to take effect, that we moved to Berlin. I found this a very exciting time to move up there. We drove in on the autobahn. I had bought a German car. You had to get Allied Berlin license plates and put them on the car before you entered the autobahn from the West. So I had travel orders —called flag orders—issued by the United States Commandant in Berlin, which entitled me, then, to go through without being stopped, interfered with, or checked or controlled in any way by the East Germans—or, for that matter, by the Russians. You handed over the travel orders at a Soviet checkpoint and that was supposed to be it. That was one area, of course, where the Russians and the East Germans had been hassling us—trying to get us to hand a passport to an East German policeman on the autobahn and that kind of thing.

So we set out. We had been instructed on what to do if we were stopped by an East German or a Russian. The standard procedure, if you were stopped by an East German, was to say, “I will speak only with a Soviet officer.” I had to learn how to say this in German. [Laughter] I needed it, because we were stopped on the autobahn by an East German cop who wanted to see our documents. I said I would speak only to a Soviet officer. I said this in German, which he understood. Then he pretended to be stupefied by this, because this was on the utterly flat, northwest German plain. You could see for miles in every direction, and there was no sign of a Soviet officer anywhere. He said, “Where am

I supposed to find a Soviet officer?" I said, "Well, that's your problem." So after holding us for five minutes he let us go on, and we got to Berlin without further incident. That was just the beginning of my introduction to what you had to expect.

I was assigned, as I said, to the Economic Section in Berlin. The head of the United States Mission at that time was Bernard Gufler, who left Berlin about a year after I arrived there. I stayed there for almost four years. Gufler was succeeded by Allan Lightner, a marvelous man who became a life long friend—both he and his wife. He has since died—about five years ago, but his wife is still in Maine, and I keep in touch with her. So I was in the Economic Section, although I didn't have any economic background.

Q: When you arrived in Berlin, what was the feeling about the Khrushchev ultimatum? What were they telling you?

BOEHM: There was a lot of excitement, but it varied. Some people were calm and others were nervous. I found that most Americans and Germans in West Berlin were calm. I didn't have any particular feeling or worry about the ultimatum but I didn't know enough about it to have much of a feeling as to what it meant. I found that most of the Americans, British, and French felt that the Russians were bluffing and that we weren't going to be attacked or forcibly ejected from Berlin. Of course, this turned out to be true. Khrushchev more or less backed away, postponing his ultimatum. So I would say that Berlin was calmer than Washington. Washington took the situation very seriously and was always excited about it. In my view Washington always misjudged or overestimated what the Soviets were capable of doing in Berlin. When I say "capable," I don't mean physically capable. I mean what they were politically capable of doing. In my view, there was never any question of an attack by the Soviets, or of the Soviets allowing the East Germans to use any rough stuff against West Berlin. But Washington was where the nuclear button was, and they took it much more seriously than we did in Berlin. Later on, this culminated in the Kennedy-Khrushchev meeting in Vienna.

Q: So you arrived in Berlin and were an Economic Officer. What were you doing?

BOEHM: It was a very interesting job. Berlin, of course, was in a tough spot economically. It was cut off from West Germany and depended on various kinds of subsidies and special conditions granted to it by both the West Germans and the Allies. West Berliners were exempt from service in the West German Army [the Bundeswehr], which, of course, was also required by the Occupation Statutes. There were subsidies. Orders for industrial goods from West Berlin firms placed by companies in West Germany were given transportation subsidies. There were grants of various kinds to keep the West Berlin economy afloat, because shipping costs and other difficulties caused by isolation were an economic disadvantage to Berlin. So they were getting extra help. The main thing was how West Berlin was doing economically, how these subsidies and various encouragements were working, where the economy was going, and how the population was going.

Berlin had an aging population. It was very underpopulated. We're talking about West Berlin. Berlin as a whole had been a city of five or six million people before World War II. West Berlin in my time had a population of two million, and East Berlin maybe had a population of one million. So it was an underpopulated city. That made it very pleasant to live in. You could jump into your car and park right in front of the Opera House—it was wonderful. I think that our life in West Berlin was probably the most agreeable that we had anywhere.

Governing the city you had a Kommandatura setup, which nominally included the Soviets, but from which they had withdrawn, so there was an empty chair. This came down to a Western Allied Kommandatura, which, in principle, was the governing body of West Berlin, with three sectors, the American, the British, and the French. Their commandants constituted the Allied Kommandatura, whose function was to approve or disapprove of laws passed by the Berlin Parliament or Senate.

While I was an economic officer, Berlin was prohibited from manufacturing anything military. So the Allied Kommandatura had committees. As an economic officer of the U. S. Mission, I participated in the Economic Committee of the Allied Kommandatura which screened applications from Berlin firms wanting to manufacture and sell anything. Most of it was routine. If the application concerned clothing, including men's or women's clothing, no problem. But if it concerned radios for the police (and Berlin was a center of electrical manufacturing) the question was whether this equipment could be considered a military item. This is something, of course, which has been going on for decades—the question of dual use items. The question was whether we should ban exports of this kind or not. Lots of stuff produced in West Berlin—in fact, I'd say a substantial component of West Berlin's industrial output—fell under the dual use category.

We and the British tended to take a relaxed view of this. If it was radios for the cops, fine. The French didn't. They took a much stricter view and said, “Well, these radios could be used in military operations and therefore constitute military material.” They were not going to authorize their manufacture and sale. So there was a constant struggle going on within the Allied Kommandatura between us, the British, and the Germans on the one hand—for the Germans would also come to meetings of this kind—and the French, on the other hand. The French representative was a very interesting and complex man, who had been a prisoner of war of the Germans for quite a long time during World War II. He had no love for the Germans and was very happy about taking very strict position on these issues.

I'll give you one example of how the French viewed Berlin. Under the agreements at the end of World War II the officers in the Allied military were entitled to be supplied by the West Berlin Government in their various sectors with cut flowers in their houses every day, with riding stables, and with various perks of other kinds. We and the British had given up our perks long ago, but the French had not. When I was there, which was almost 15 years after the end of World War II, the French were still getting their cut flowers and maintaining their riding stables at German expense. [Laughter] This was the view that they took. After

all, they had beaten the Germans and they had it coming to them and weren't going to forget it. They were the last to give up their privileges and the first to say, “No, you can't manufacture this.”

You asked me a question some time ago as to what I did. One of the more interesting things was participating in that committee. We had to refer any disputes and disagreements within the committee to the Allied ambassadors in Bonn, who were also, ex officio, Allied High Commissioners for Germany. They would have to sort out any dispute. Ordinarily, we'd end up winning any disputes. The French Ambassador in Bonn would be persuaded to reverse the decision of the French Commandant, and the Germans in Berlin could go ahead and manufacture radios, or whatever it might be. But at times there was a struggle about it.

Q: Did you get involved, with your counterparts in the British and French Missions, in any horse trading about this, or did you just report the facts, more or less, and up they went [to the Ambassadors in Bonn].

BOEHM: You tried to get your position accepted by the others by talking to them. Horse trading, I would say, probably did not take place, because the French simply would not trade. They were the main problem. I tried to get to know the senior French economic guy, the man I referred to a few minutes ago. As I said, he was a very complex man, a very interesting one. He was a hard man. He had been scarred by his experiences as a POW in Germany. He loved the French language and culture. Because of my background in France, having gone to the Sorbonne for a year, I had a pretty good knowledge of French literature and culture. I could quote Baudelaire and Racine to him, and he liked that. So we were able to become friends. I'd like to think that, once in a while, he would make a concession to us out of friendship, but nothing serious. He was a very strong-willed man and had a strong mind.

Q: Were all of the things that you've been talking about limited to West Berlin?

BOEHM: Yes. Our authority was limited to West Berlin. However, at the time I got there, we had full access to East Berlin. Once in a while, when you crossed into East Berlin, an East German cop would try to control you. You would take the usual position, “Sorry, no, I don't do that. Just look at my license plates.” And eventually we'd get into East Berlin. This happened on a sporadic basis and was obviously done with Soviet approval. We had access to East Berlin and would go over there often. There were great museums, and the great theaters and opera houses were all in East Berlin—right near the sector border. So we went over to East Berlin quite often.

Q: Did you have contact with East Berlin—the Mayor and people like that?

BOEHM: No. We didn't deal with them. We sought to deal with the Soviets only, because we wanted to keep responsibility for East Berlin firmly on them. So we didn't deal with the East German authorities. However, we had a whole section in the Berlin Mission, called Eastern Affairs, which covered and reported on what was going on in East Berlin, including the German aspect of East Berlin. But the Eastern Affairs Section didn't deal officially with any East Germans. We wanted to keep the Russians in the forefront and prevent them from doing what they were obviously trying to do, which was to disengage and force us to deal with the East German authorities.

Q: What was the rationale behind our policy?

BOEHM: At that point maintaining our position in Berlin was certainly a holding operation. We didn't recognize East Germany at the time, of course. Our position was to prevent East German recognition and to reject and rebut the East German claim that Berlin was the capital of the German Democratic Republic, as they called it.

Of course, eventually we came to recognize the GDR. We opened an Embassy in East Berlin in the 1970's, but at the time I was in Berlin the whole idea was to make it clear that we did not accept the East German Government. We did not recognize it and we

didn't accept any limitations on the rights we had acquired under the Potsdam Agreement [of 1945]. This agreement was the settlement reached at the end of World War II, which established the whole structure of Berlin and the Allied military government. So we tried very hard to preserve that position.

The ultimate objective, of course, was German reunification which we felt at the time—as it turned out to be the case later on—would mean that West Germany would be the model that would be followed, not East Germany. The Soviets, of course, were trying to do precisely the opposite, to freeze the situation, leaving a separate East Germany as a state.

Q: As an economic officer, were you looking at economic developments in East Germany?

BOEHM: That was part of the functions of the Eastern Affairs Section. They followed East German developments.

What we had in the Economic Section, of which I was the junior member, was Inter-Zonal Trade, as it was called. That is, trade between West and East Germany. This heavily favored East Germany. It was kind of a bribe that the West Germans paid to the East Germans, in return for the East Germans letting people out of East Germany and not hassling people. It was structured to favor the East Germans and to prevent things like the airlift from having to be resumed.

Q: You're talking about the 1948 blockade?

BOEHM: We wanted to prevent another blockade from taking place, by making inter-zonal trade attractive to the East Germans. The West Germans, of course, had also accumulated vast supplies which were stored in West Berlin, against the possibility of the resumption of a blockade. All of that came under the scrutiny of the Economic Section of our Berlin Mission [USBER], of which I was a part. The inter-zonal trade question involved regular meetings between West German and East German representatives. It was almost the only official contact between West and East Germany, so it was used for all kinds of

other purposes as well. We sometimes would ask the West German representative at these meetings to feel out the East Germans about one thing or another. So it was a very active and interesting kind of job.

Q: Were you getting any kind of feel, as an economic officer, about the type of goods which East and West Germany could produce at this particular time?

BOEHM: Well, West Germany, of course, was doing very well. You had Ludwig Erhard, who was Minister of Economic Affairs of West Germany. Konrad Adenauer was Federal German Chancellor at the time. It was the time of the West German wirtschaftswunder, or economic miracle. West Germany was burgeoning.

East Germany was probably doing somewhat the same by Eastern European or Soviet Bloc standards. It was the most advanced country in the East Bloc, but in comparison with West Germany it was a slum. It looked pretty bad. At the time I was in Berlin, we couldn't travel anywhere in East Germany. We could only go to East Berlin. So we couldn't go and eyeball the situation in East Germany for ourselves. Once in a while—once a year—at the time of the Leipzig Fair in East Germany, some of the people from the Western missions in Berlin were allowed to go to Leipzig, to the fair. They could see what they could see as they went. Some Western businessmen also went, so obviously you couldn't keep a country like that completely hidden from outside scrutiny. But we couldn't give it the kind of examination that we would like to have done. However, it was very clear that East Germany was lagging way behind West Germany, though it was well ahead of the rest of the East Bloc.

Q: You already mentioned that the feeling in the Mission was that you didn't think that the Soviets were really going to try to do something. Was it the feeling that if they tried to do something, such as another blockade, or something like that, that this might cause war or wouldn't work or whatever?

BOEHM: The feeling in Washington was that there was a danger of a Soviet or Soviet-provoked East German attack of some kind on West Berlin and that this might lead to war, including nuclear war. It was generally agreed by everybody that the Allied forces in Berlin could not defend Berlin against a determined attack by the Soviets. The Soviets had something like 800,000 troops in East Germany—a huge army, organized in what was called, Group of Soviet Forces in Germany, or the GSFG. Really, between us and the British and the French we probably had 11,000 or 12,000 troops in West Berlin. The West Germans, who at the time couldn't maintain an Army in West Berlin, had the Ready Police, a paramilitary, well trained force, consisting of 11,000 or 12,000 men. There was no question of defending the city against an attack. It was generally agreed that if war came, the Soviets could roll right through West Berlin and that the only way to stop them would be a nuclear response to such an attack. Since nobody wanted to say that that would never be done, the debate at the time was over agreements providing for no first use of nuclear weapons.

It was proposed that we and the Soviets should reach agreement on “no first use” of nuclear weapons. We never would enter into such an agreement. Berlin, Germany, and Central Europe were part of the reason. The Soviets, as I say, really had us outgunned there, so we had to have the nuclear threat available.

However, in the minds of the policy makers and those responsible in Washington—and I suppose that you have to give them credit for this—was the fear that a nuclear war might be ignited over Berlin. In our view—and I think that I can speak for almost everybody that I knew in West Berlin—the Soviets simply were not interested in provoking that kind of conflict. They would bluff and toy and see what they could get away with, they would harass and hassle us, but they would always know when enough was enough. I still think that that was the case.

Q: Then we move up to the Berlin Wall crisis and all that. In the first place, the Kennedy administration came into office in January, 1961. Did you and the American military have concerns about this new administration and how it would respond in Berlin?

BOEHM: I think that our concern in the foreign affairs field, especially with regard to a long-standing problem like Berlin, is that when a new administration enters office, you're going to be dealing with a whole new group of people. This especially applies to a change of political party, not just a change in administration. Almost everybody is replaced. You're dealing with a new administration, a new President, new Secretary of State, new everybody. Your concern is that there's going to be a long indoctrination process involved. You wonder, will they listen or won't they? How much background will they have on this situation, on which to base their policy decisions? We had all of these concerns with President Kennedy and would have had them with anybody else.

We had that concern, because Berlin was always either on the negotiating table or hovering around the edges of it. We wanted to make sure that the situation was fully understood and appreciated by the Kennedy people coming in. I'm not sure that it was. We wanted to get everybody to come and visit, brief them on the spot, and look at it. We tried for years to get Walter Lippmann to go to Berlin. [Laughter] He never would go. He said that he didn't want the kind of emotional involvement that the administration wanted to get him into. He said that he wanted to remain detached and objective. That was his view. He never would go. But we tried to get everyone to come and look at the situation.

Of course, with President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles the situation was very clear. Eleanor Dulles, by the way, was very much involved.

Q: Oh, yes, she was Miss Berlin.

BOEHM: I had occasion to escort Eleanor Dulles sometimes, when she'd come to Berlin.

Q: Could you talk a little about her, because she was an important figure in connection with Berlin issues? I've heard various opinions about her, that she kind of ran her own show. How did you find her?

BOEHM: Well, she did run her own show. She didn't try to conceal her last name. [Laughter] In fact, she was married, and Dulles was not her married name. She called herself Eleanor Dulles, so the fact that she was John Foster's little sister or big sister—I'm not sure which—was no secret.

Q: She looked like him. What did you think of her?

BOEHM: Eleanor, of course, had been very much involved in German affairs. There had been a separate bureau, at one point, which dealt exclusively with German affairs. Eleanor was a major player in that. Again, because she was the Secretary of State's sister, she had even more impact that she would have had otherwise. I think that her role had been shrinking a bit by the time I knew her. Her main function in Washington in the Berlin context, in the Bureau of German Affairs, and later in the Office of German Affairs, which became part of the Bureau of European Affairs, was the revival and stimulation of the Berlin economy. She had money and grants to hand out. Her trips to Berlin were primarily in the context of funding various kinds of activities—cultural activities, and one, huge project costing millions of dollars, a new hospital for West Berlin. Eleanor had the first...

Q: Whose money was it?

BOEHM: It was our money—well, US and German. We put in some and then the Germans put in some. We put in a lot. It was a big grant. This project involved a brand new teaching hospital. I suppose that the Germans had a lot of voice in it, but Eleanor Dulles had a lot of clout, too. When she really wanted something, she tended to get it. I would go with her to these long meetings with the Germans, as the construction of the hospital was proceeding. The Germans and she disagreed on certain things that should or shouldn't

be there. I can recall spending an entire morning, listening to Eleanor Dulles and the then president of the Berlin House of Representatives, a plumber by the name of Willi Henneberg, arguing. Eleanor wanted the nurses' rooms to have bathtubs. Willi thought that this was an unnecessary luxury and they could damned well settle for showers.

But the question of the plumbing in the nurses' quarters became an issue that took up almost an entire day to argue out. Henneberg said, “Look, if we give them [the nurses] this facility, every other nurse in Berlin is going to want it in every other hospital, and we just haven't got the money to provide it.” Eleanor Dulles said, “This is to be a model, a teaching hospital. Damn it, they will have the bathtubs. Well, they got the bathtubs. That was the kind of thing that Eleanor was doing.

She was treated very well by the Berliners and was given red carpet treatment. She was an interesting figure. I lost complete touch with her when I left the Economic Section. I was in that job for only a year and then moved on to a different job in Berlin.

The new head of the Mission, Allan Lightner, wanted a staff aide and wanted me in this job. I was 29 when I joined the Foreign Service. By this time I was in my mid-30's, and the idea of being a staff aide didn't appeal to me. But I had to take the job, so I took it.

I did that for a year and then moved on to the Political Section, where I'd always wanted to be. I spent the last year or year and one-half in the Political Section in Berlin, which was the place to be. In the Political Section I was called the Access Officer. The Access Officer watched over the Autobahn, the air corridors, the movement between West Berlin and West Germany and between East and West Berlin. So I handled all aspects of the whole thing. The Autobahn crisis and the air corridor crisis were all mine.

Q: Did you take this job at about the time the Kennedy administration came in?

BOEHM: Kennedy came in in January, 1961. Let me see, from roughly April, 1959, to, say, the summer of 1960 I was in the Economic Section. So I would have moved into the Staff

Aide slot, say, in the summer of 1960. I did that for about a year. Lightner said that I would be in that job for about a year, before I moved into the Political Section. So I moved into the Political Section just before the crisis involving construction of the Berlin Wall.

Q: As you took on this access job, did you find that it was a constant problem—I mean, were [the Soviets and the East Germans] constantly trying out probes and things like that?

BOEHM: Yes, it was a constant problem. It was more than a full-time job.

Q: It must have been quite a problem, particularly when you had military people involved. For the military, there's always the 10% who don't get the word. They tend to be very young and they can go off in all different directions.

BOEHM: They can do things whose significance they do not always appreciate, but which represent a concession. Or you have some of these people—like me and my family, for example—coming in for the first time on the Autobahn. I had been briefed and did the right thing. If I hadn't been briefed, I might have handed this East German cop my passport, and he might have tried to put a stamp in it, which was, of course, a big no-no. So, yes, you did have this problem of naivete and the word not getting around. You could have a U. S. military convoy leader agreeing to let the Soviets count the number of men in the back of the truck.

Q: You just dropped the tailgate, wasn't that it?

BOEHM: We just dropped the tailgate. They could count from outside, but we didn't get our men out of the truck, and they couldn't go in [and check them].

Q: With all of these problems, there must have been cases of people doing what they shouldn't do. But the world didn't come to an end. How did we deal with them?

BOEHM: We didn't accept the notion that that would establish some kind of precedent. The Soviets would try that on us. They'd say, “Well, your guy did this yesterday. What are

you making such a fuss about?" We took the view that a mistake made by a subordinate or unwary person didn't change the rules, and we weren't going to accept mistakes as precedents. But you'd have holdups. You'd have delays and obstacles. You'd have convoys sitting for eight hours on the Autobahn because the Soviets were trying to create problems or were trying to use the East Germans.

I can probably tell this story because it happened a long time ago. It must have been 35 years ago. [Laughter] We had some large vehicles going up and down the Autobahn. At one point the Soviets allowed the East Germans to set up baffles, or a series of barriers, so that only relatively small vehicles could weave their way through. The larger vehicles would get stuck there. Then there would be an incident. The East Germans wanted to prove something. An idea which I had permission to try out was to get a very large vehicle, a low-boy, as they were called, a vehicle with a big flatbed loaded with girders. As it would try to maneuver, it would knock these baffles out of the way. As I said, I got permission to try it out. Our military agreed to it. They loaded up the low-boy with girders. It did what it was supposed to do. It knocked the baffles out of the way. It went on down the Autobahn, and nobody stopped it. So we got away with it. The Russians were furious about that, by the way.

Q: You get this kind of thing and you can imagine seeing a Russian or East German counter-response. All of a sudden they might have cement reinforced baffles and things like that. There are these games.

BOEHM: It could happen, too.

Q: There must have been somewhere along the chain of command [on both sides] where two senior people, either military or civilian, Allied or Soviet, would sit down and say, "Let's cut out this nonsense."

BOEHM: More often than not you would protest. We were protesting all of the time. There was a Four-Power structure of POLAD's, or Political Advisers. They would go over and talk

to their Soviet counterparts at Karlshorst, which is where the Soviets headquarters were, just outside Berlin. They would try to negotiate an end to difficulties of that kind. But the Soviets were becoming tougher and tougher.

Of course, there were times when, I think, there were genuine misunderstandings, when a low-ranking Soviet military type would go beyond the point where his masters wanted him to go. That kind of thing could generally be settled. The Soviets would never admit that they had made a mistake, but they'd stop doing what they had been doing. In general, the Soviet attitude was hardening. It was getting harder and harder. The Soviets were trying to prevent us from meeting with them. They wouldn't be in their offices, or our man couldn't get into their headquarters because it was closed. They wanted us to back away. They wanted to force us to talk to the East Germans. But when it came to a real crunch, when something got out of hand, the Soviets would be available. They would make themselves available, and you could talk to them. When these issues threatened to become very serious, the Soviets tended to stop. The issues tended to go away. I was convinced that the Soviets had a limit, beyond which they didn't want to go.

Q: What was your analysis of these incidents? Were they being orchestrated from Moscow very carefully or...

BOEHM: We assumed that Moscow was calling the shots. The East Germans probably had some leeway, within limits set by the Russians. When the Russians wanted to turn up the heat, they would do it, using either their own people or the East Germans. Very often, they would do this directly. For example, the question of Allied flights in the air corridors. The Soviets themselves—this had nothing to do with the East Germans—would say, “You can't use flight levels 10 or 12 or whatever.” This meant 10,000 or 12,000 feet. The air corridors were divided up into flight levels. The Soviets would try to bar us from using certain flight levels, whereas under the Potsdam Agreement and related agreements, we simply notified them of where and when we would be flying. The air corridors had been set aside for our use. When we had a flight coming or going, we would notify an

organization known as the Berlin Air Safety Center, a four-power body staffed by Air Force people from the three Western Allies and the Russians, which had its offices in the Allied Control Council building in West Berlin. They would pass these notifications around. The notification would say that we were going to have a flight at such and such a flight level on such and such a date and what have you.

The East Germans weren't involved in that. However, once in a while the Russians would hand the notifications back, saying, “No, we're going to have some flights crossing the corridor at certain levels, and you can't use that level.” Then we would say, “Well, you can't do that. These are our corridors and our altitude levels, and we can use whatever we want.” However, a rule of reason would apply. If, in fact, the Soviets had a legitimate reason or problem of some kind, we could change the flight level. The system worked fairly well.

The question, also, of flights within the Berlin Control Zone would be at issue, because any flights coming into Berlin—or going out of Berlin, for that matter—would fly over Berlin. Tempelhof Airport, for example, was right in the middle of the city. So you had these Allied military flights coming right in over Berlin at low altitudes. That raised other issues, such as noise, for example. You had special rules for helicopters. We took the position that helicopters could fly anywhere within the Berlin Control Zone, that is, the air space above the city. At times, the Russians would say, “No, they can't. They can't fly below a certain altitude.” We couldn't accept that. What happened on one occasion was that a low-flying U. S. helicopter was hit by a metal bolt. The pilot actually saw somebody shoot it at him with a slingshot. This was very alarming, because it isn't very hard to bring down a helicopter. You hit a rotor with that bolt, and down goes the helicopter. So there was that kind of problem. We had constant alarums and excursions of all kinds.

Q: I remember interviewing another person who was in Berlin—I'm not sure whether it was at this time or not. You're talking about the Soviet side, but there was also the American

soldier who would go off and try playing around with a helicopter or with a vehicle. They would be pressing the limits, not under instructions but out of cussedness or...

BOEHM: I think that we were always aware of that. It could go one way or the other. Either a low-ranking, subordinate American or, at times, somebody a little more senior, who would go too far in accommodating the Soviets or, all on his own, would decide to try a little probe of some kind. We took that possibility into account. We didn't always assume that everything that happened was a Soviet plot. We recognized that things could happen through our own fault, as they did, at times.

Q: Well, how did the Berlin Wall crisis develop, from your perspective?

BOEHM: From my perspective—and I think that I said this in a book, though not my book. It was by a man named Catudal, an historian who wrote a book on the Berlin Wall crisis. He got in touch with me, and with a number of others who had been in Berlin at the time. I talked to him off the record. He left my name out of the text but put it in his footnotes. [Laughter] He quoted me by name on this, so it's in print already.

In the summer of 1961—I think that it was in mid to late July—President Kennedy gave a speech or made a statement on Berlin. It seemed to me at the time that in that statement he unmistakably made a sharp distinction between the extent to which we were committed to West Berlin and Berlin as a whole. Up to that time we had always taken the position that we made no such distinction, although in practical terms, we made this distinction every day. However, formally speaking and as a matter of policy, we made no such distinction. We said that the four sectors of Berlin were set up entirely for administrative convenience but have no political significance. We said that all of the Allies have rights in all of Berlin.

At that time, in July, 1961, Kennedy took a different position. He said that West Berlin was what we were really committed to. That left East Berlin out in the cold. There was a mild shock in Berlin, but it didn't seem to hit the press. It seemed to me that it wasn't recognized

as the major departure from previous policy which, in fact, it was. I'm convinced that it attracted the attention of Moscow, where they pored over every word.

Q: Was it deliberate?

BOEHM: Oh, yes, I think it was deliberate. I think that Kennedy was preparing the ground to avoid making a huge, life and death issue out of East Berlin. You can have your own view as to whether that was right or wrong, but in fact I think that that was taken by the Russians as a signal that we weren't going to go to the mat with them on East Berlin. The Berlin Wall began to go up in the following month. Also, Kennedy and Khrushchev had already met.

Q: This was in Vienna.

BOEHM: In Vienna a few months earlier. From my point of view that meeting was a disaster because Kennedy didn't come out as forcefully as one would have liked. We later came to think of Kennedy as the hero of Berlin because of his appearance in Berlin after the Wall went up and his statement that “I am a Berliner.” At the time of the Vienna meeting with Khrushchev and in the speech he made in July, 1961, it seemed to me that he wasn't taking a very strong position.

Q: I was here in Washington more or less at this time, though I'm not sure of the exact time. However, after Kennedy met with Khrushchev and came back to Washington, he called up the reserves.

BOEHM: That was after the Berlin Wall went up. It was part of the Wall crisis.

Q: As I recall it, the construction of the Berlin Wall was in response to the fact that many East Germans were concerned about the situation. There was a hemorrhage [of people leaving East Berlin and East Germany and going to the West].

BOEHM: There was. In Berlin, until the wall went up, you had large numbers of people called border crossers. They lived in one side of Berlin and worked on the other side. Primarily, they lived in East Berlin and worked in West Berlin. There also were people who lived in West Berlin and worked in East Berlin, but there was a smaller number of these. That was a legal arrangement. They could go back and forth on the subway. There had always been a trickle of refugees coming into West Berlin. Suddenly, the whole situation swelled, and the border crossers simply stayed in West Berlin.

Q: What was the reason for this?

BOEHM: Well, I'm not sure what it was and I've always wondered about it. There was a theory at the time that the refugees knew that something was up. They somehow sensed that the wall was going to go up and they wanted to do something. They wanted to get out of East Berlin while they still could. That seems to be perfectly plausible. They were reading the tea leaves, just as we were.

Q: Did you feel the rising tension?

BOEHM: Tension, yes, because of the flood of refugees. Of course, that was an everyday involvement for us and our wives, who were working at the refugee camps, feeding people, giving them blankets, and so forth. Refugees were pouring in in large numbers, and the refugee camp at Marienfelde filled up. They were eventually taken to West Germany.

Q: Did you in the Political Section see this as...

BOEHM: We thought that the East Germans would have to stop this refugee flow. I don't think that we anticipated—I didn't, anyway—that they were going to build the wall. I didn't see them as physically building a wall, although there were people who thought that they might do that. We all felt that they had to take some measures to stop this flow. The most likely measure would be to prevent people going from East Germany into East Berlin. They

were going through. They would go to East Berlin and then to West Berlin. I haven't got a breakdown on this, but perhaps a majority of those who were coming into West Berlin were not East Berliners, as such, but were from elsewhere in East Germany. So we had an idea that they might close that border, and they had more or less taken some steps in that direction. If you were an East German, you had to have a permit to go into East Berlin from elsewhere in East Germany. It seemed more likely that they would cut that off. In fact, they ended up building the wall.

Q: What happened when the wall went up?

BOEHM: I was on vacation in Bavaria. I had taken my wife and children to Bavaria. I heard on the news that something was going on in Berlin—the wall, or something else was happening at the border with the Soviet sector. I cut short my vacation. We went back to Berlin. Depending on how you define the wall, we probably got there two days after construction of the wall started. It didn't start as a wall, as far as I was concerned. It initially consisted of rolls of accordion barbed wire. Then they replaced that with kind of a flimsy cement block structure. It was worked on over a long period of time, before it became the full-fledged wall.

On the day after I got back to Berlin we had a meeting at the US Mission. It was decided that we ought to probe to see how the Soviets were playing the Allied access rights. I think that we'd recognized the fact that we really couldn't control what was done with Germans going back and forth to and from East Berlin. We wanted to see whether Allied rights of access would be respected, probably as a way of finding out what they [the Soviets] were up to or what they were trying to do.

Another officer from the Mission and I were instructed to make probes. There were eight or 10 places along the sector border where you could go back and forth to East Berlin. So we took an official Mission car with U. S. military plates on it and went to each of these places to see if we could get into East Berlin. We found that we were able to get through

at some places but not at others. We then proceeded to analyze the situation. We thought that instructions had been issued to stop all Allied cars, but not all of the checkpoints had yet been plugged in. Eventually, of course, access boiled down to Checkpoint Charlie. Everything else was closed, but they never actually and totally cut off Allied access to East Berlin. I was able to go back there years later, when the wall was coming down. I got a couple of pieces of it.

So the question became, there they are. They're building this wall. You could see that. What should we do about it? This was where the Mission in Berlin and Washington disagreed on how strong our reaction should be. I think that Washington more or less took the view that unless Allied access were totally cut, our public, propaganda reaction could be large scale, but our physical reaction would be muted. In Berlin many took the view that we should just push our way through the wall and that the Soviets would collapse like a house of cards. Well, it was impossible to get Washington to agree to try that, so it never was put to the test. Kennedy's earlier statement had accepted the fact that East Berlin was gone, in effect. As long as we had a shred, a less than total cutoff of Allied access, we could accept it. So we ended up accepting it.

There were all of those terrible incidents, of course, of East Berliners throwing themselves out of windows and landing on the pavement in West Berlin because the sector border happened to be the wall of a house or an apartment building. The people living in a given building were in East Berlin. However, once they were out of the window, the sidewalk below was West Berlin. They would try to get out that way until all of those windows were bricked up. It was a very strange and tragic situation.

Q: Well, what was your feeling and maybe that of some of your colleagues? I'm sure our military was talking tough. Were they saying, “We can break down that barrier with tanks and so forth”? Maybe not. What were you hearing from them?

BOEHM: I wouldn't say that you had that kind of sharp difference. Very often, the civilians talked tougher than the military. I've seen this everywhere, including at war games at the National War College. [Laughter] The military are the ones who actually have to do it. They tend to say, “Well, wait a minute.” They look at the balance of forces and at what's actually going to happen, whereas the civilians are ready to say, “Go ahead and do it.” I wouldn't say that the military in Berlin were particularly bellicose in the way they looked at the situation. I think that they were waiting for political instructions. If they had been ordered to send a tank or something like that, pushing through the barbed wire, they would have done it. But I don't think that they were eager to do it. They were prepared to do what they were told to do, but they weren't beating the war drums. I think that they recognized that if it came to a real fight, they were going to take an awful licking in Berlin. They knew the realities of tank warfare. They tend to be realistic about such things.

Q: How did you feel at the time?

BOEHM: I think that I felt disheartened by the fact that Kennedy, in effect, had laid the groundwork for this. Washington calls the shots. They make the policy. I felt—and I'm convinced now that I was right—that the Kennedy administration decided not to make a fight for East Berlin. That being the case, there you were. Looking at things from a practical point of view, the wall was right on the sectoral border—and I'm talking about inches. Well, first of all, you couldn't knock down the wall initially. It was made up of barbed wire. You could push it back but you couldn't knock it down. Then, when a wall went up suppose you knock it down, and they build the wall 50 yards farther back in East Berlin. Do you knock it down then? What are the legal aspects? It looked to me like a sticky wicket, given the fact that Washington clearly wasn't prepared to make a major issue of it. Our hands were kind of tied. I think that that's probably what I was thinking at the time.

Q: You were there, so you probably had a feeling for the situation. What I recall is that around that time Kennedy made a speech saying how awful this was. He called up the reserves. I must say that there was a feeling in Washington that we were very close to

war. People talk about the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, but they forget about this Berlin crisis. I remember sitting in Washington and thinking that I really ought to send my family off to Montana or some place like that.

BOEHM: You people in Washington were scared to death. We were not. I wasn't and I don't think that my colleagues were, either. We were right in Berlin. I don't think that we could visualize the Soviets or, for that matter, Washington, starting a war. I couldn't see Washington doing anything unless West Berlin were attacked. I couldn't see the Soviets doing that in West Berlin. On the contrary, having taken this step—or having allowed the East Germans to take this step—of starting to build this wall, they didn't want to do anything else.

Yes, you're right. Kennedy called up the reserves and declared a national emergency or whatever it was called at the time.

Q: And sent more troops to West Berlin.

BOEHM: He sent a battle group under then Col Glover Johns, belting down the Autobahn into Berlin to show our resolve. They were met at the West Berlin and by then Vice President Johnson. It was a morale question, I think. It was not a matter of intimidating the Soviets but of bolstering the morale of the West Berliners. And it worked. Their morale was bolstered. Of course, Kennedy followed it up, before too long, by sending Gen. Lucius Clay, the former military governor who had saved Berlin during the Blockade by arranging for the airlift. Kennedy sent Clay as a personal representative of the President to West Berlin. These measures did, in fact, restore the morale of West Berliners. I don't think that they scared the Soviets. They did show the Soviets that, perhaps, they should cool it.

Q: When the wall went up, you were a political officer. Were you going around sounding out what West Berliners thought? What were you getting from them?

BOEHM: I don't think that they were ready to go to war. They were dismayed, of course, but they were waiting to see what the Allies would do. They hoped that the Allies would take a strong position but at the same time I don't think that they wanted the Allies to start fighting. They would be the first to suffer and they knew that. I think that they were worried about their own security, primarily, and those worries were eased and allayed by these measures that I've just referred to: the sending of the battle group and Lucius Clay.

Q: Were you looking for a possible exodus from West Berlin?

BOEHM: We were looking for signs of that. There wasn't any. There was no mass exodus from West Berlin.

Q: Thinking now in terms of the 1990's, were you getting any feeling that, "Well, the wall may be a bad thing, but it's keeping those Easterners from coming into West Berlin." Was there any of that?

BOEHM: There was none of that, none at all. Everybody was dismayed by the human consequences of the wall.

Q: So you were there in Berlin until when?

BOEHM: Until the summer of 1962. After the construction of the wall, we had an Autobahn crisis and an air corridor crisis.

Q: What were these about? Could you describe them?

BOEHM: The Autobahn crisis was basically just more of the same. It involved hassling and harassment of US military convoys on the Autobahn. After the initial shock of the wall began to subside, the Soviets again wanted to turn up the heat and isolate West Berlin, or make it feel isolated. A convoy would be stopped, as you mentioned, so that they could lower the tailgate and count the number of people inside. They wanted a roster of names

of the people in the trucks, but we wouldn't provide that, and there were very frequent and constant delays. The Soviets would say, “You can only send convoys with less than 10 vehicles in them.” So we'd send one with 15 vehicles. Then it would go to the checkpoint, and the Soviets would hold it up. They'd sit there for a while, and then the Soviets would allow them to go through. The Soviets always backed off from those things eventually. They were just playing around and hassling the convoys, trying to create a psychology of concern and feelings of isolation and fragility about the situation in West Berlin.

The air corridor crisis was more serious. By that time Gen. Lucius Clay had arrived. The whole Clay episode was extraordinarily interesting.

Q: Let's talk about that.

BOEHM: As I recall it, Clay had visited West Berlin at the time of the sending of the battle group. Then Vice President Lyndon Johnson arrived in Berlin just in time to greet the battle group. His timing was beautiful. He'd come from Helsinki, as I recall it. Was it Johnson—or maybe it was Bobby Kennedy—who had Lucius Clay with him? Everybody was going to Berlin. It might have been Bobby Kennedy, but I can't recall. Clay was not the principal visitor—whether he was with Johnson or Bobby Kennedy, I can't remember—but to West Berliners Clay was the main event. When the visitors would appear on a balcony of the Rathaus—City Hall—the crowd would be yelling, “Clay, Clay,” not Bobby or anybody else. The star visitor—whether Vice President Johnson or Bobby Kennedy—brought back to Washington a report of Clay's enormously high standing with the Berliners. President Kennedy decided that it would be a good idea to send Clay to Berlin again to bolster morale. But the President misjudged or underestimated his man. Clay didn't regard himself as a figurehead who was going to bolster morale. He regarded himself as a decision-maker who was somehow going to push the Soviets back. He was a proponent of strong measures which culminated in the famous tank confrontation at Checkpoint Charlie.

Q: Well, would you talk about it? These are interesting matters.

BOEHM: Clay was a very strong man. He had a gaze that would shoot right through you. He was an imposing figure. His presence there was confusing to everybody, because he didn't have any counterparts. There was no British, French, or Russian Clay. The Russians managed to drag out of mothballs Marshal Konev, who had been, I think, military governor of East Germany at the time Clay had been his US counterpart in West Germany. [Konev] was sent back to East Germany as a sort of Soviet answer to Clay. They had one meeting, as I recall, at Potsdam. Nothing came of it, and it didn't settle anything.

Clay's position was that of Special Representative of President Kennedy, but no one knew how to fit him into the Berlin structure—the Allied Kommandatura in Berlin or the Allied Control Council, whose headquarters was in Berlin but which consisted ex officio of the American, British, and French ambassadors in Bonn and the Soviet Ambassador in East Berlin. He didn't fit into any of these niches. At the same time everybody knew that he was very important and that he had a direct line to President Kennedy, although he didn't have separate communications. He used US Mission communications facilities. His messages had to be released for transmission by the deputy chief of the Mission, as the senior State Department representative was called.

That is something I should have discussed before. The Berlin structure was that the US military commander was the United States Commandant in Berlin, and the senior State Department representative was the deputy commandant. Then you had the Mission's structure in which the Ambassador in Bonn was chief of mission in Berlin. The senior State Department representative was assistant chief of mission.

Clay's telegrams had to be approved by the senior State Department representative in Berlin. But basically that was a rubber stamp. The only thing was that it enabled the senior State Department officer to read what Clay was saying. If he didn't like it, he had the opportunity to go to see Clay and say, “Of course, if you want to send this, we'll send it, but I wonder if you'd listen to my thoughts on it,” and try to get Clay to change it. Sometimes this function fell to me. [Laughter] As I said, Clay was a very imposing figure who wouldn't

hesitate to say, “What kind of wimp are you? Are you a commie or something?” But if you stood up to him, he'd listen. Sometimes, I found that if I said, “Look, this is the way I see it. If we do this, here's what's going to happen. If we do what you're recommending, here's what's going to happen,” he would listen and very often make the changes I wanted. But you had to stand up to him, and he was a very intimidating person.

So, as I said, he was there, and everybody knew that he was important, but nobody knew quite what to do with him. He was taking a strong position. One night Allan Lightner, the senior State Department officer at the time, and his wife, were going to attend the opera in East Berlin. On the way into East Berlin they were stopped by East German cops. They had passed through [the American military police at] Checkpoint Charlie but hadn't been able to get all the way through to the other side. They were in a kind of No Man's Land. They were stuck there. Lightner wouldn't give them his passport, and the East Germans wouldn't let him go. Eventually, they persuaded Mrs. Lightner to come back out, and Lightner sat there. Eventually, he came back out. Then we decided to do it again. We decided that we would have him go in again, this time escorted by armed US military personnel in jeeps and all of that. There was an enormous American lieutenant, Lt. Pilchuck, about 10 feet high and eight feet wide. We had him standing in a jeep, cradling a gun. Lightner then got through.

Gen. Clay's idea was to force the Soviets to get involved in this matter because it had all been East German up to that point. That is, stopping Lightner, fooling around with him, holding him, and all that sort of thing. So he began to escalate the issue, beyond armed escort. He sent tanks up to Checkpoint Charlie, which was then just a little shack. I was down there that day when our tanks came. They were old M-48's. However, an M-48 in a narrow street can make quite an impression. They came racing up to the sector border, and Russian tanks showed up on the other side. That was what Clay wanted. He wanted to get the Russians to acknowledge their responsibilities.

It all eventually subsided. We came out ahead on that, and we were able to go back and forth. The Soviets backed off. This is my recollection of it.

Then the air corridor crisis came along. President Kennedy was famous at that time as the Berlin Desk Officer. Everybody knew that Kennedy was calling all the day-to-day, working level shots. Frank Cash—did you know him?—was the number two in the Office of Berlin Affairs. Martin Hillenbrand was then the director of the Office, and Frank was his deputy. Frank called me up [in Berlin]. I was Access Officer, so I was the one to call. Frank said, “Thought is being given”—and I knew he meant that President Kennedy was giving this matter the thought—”to suspending our flights to Berlin.” They had been flying passenger flights. PanAm had been given the charter for the Berlin flights. And the British and French also had their airlines flying in and out of Berlin. [Soviet aircraft] were cutting in close to [these aircraft] to stop the traffic. The Soviets were making threatening noises and were dropping what is called chaff or window [anti-radar device, like Christmas tinsel] in the air corridors to upset the radar. So Kennedy was thinking of stopping the flights. We didn't want to. We were convinced that the Soviets did not want to bring down Allied civilian aircraft or, for that matter, Allied military aircraft. Suspending the traffic would really have been a serious blow to West Berlin, because that was the lifeline. You can cut the Autobahn any time, but the only way you could cut the air corridor is by shooting down an airplane. We were convinced that the Soviets wouldn't do that. So this lifeline had to be kept open.

Frank Cash said, “I've been asked to get the Mission's answers to 10 questions. I'd like to give them to you on the phone and then you can send in your replies by telegram.” The questions included points like, what if we stopped civilian flights but continued military flights or what if we were to let the flights continue with Pan Am aircraft, although piloted by US Air Force personnel, and with no passengers. There were various possibilities about how to respond to this threat in the air corridor. I said, “I'm going to give you the best answers I can over the telephone ahead of time.” I said that this was going to have to be

a Mission position and I would have to get it approved at the top level. So I gave him my impressions of what the answers would probably be. What it added up to was “Keep 'em flying.” Then I drafted a telegram containing these answers and went over to Lightner's house. He was at home. I showed the telegram to him, and he said, “Good.” However, he said, “You'd better take this out to Clay.” Clay was having dinner that evening with Willy Brandt.

Q: Was he the mayor of Berlin at that time?

BOEHM: He was the mayor. Clay was having dinner with Brandt. I was sent out by Lightner to clear this telegram with Clay. I had to have Clay pulled out of the dinner party. Clay was giving the dinner party himself. Clay came out, and we went into a little library. He read the telegram and said, “Fine. Just add one further recommendation: send fighter escorts.” [Laughter] I gulped and said to him, “General, if we include that recommendation, you know what's going to happen in Washington, don't you? They're going to stop the flights, because they won't send fighter escorts. If they see that fighter escorts are necessary, they'll just stop the flights.” He thought for a minute and said, “All right, just send it the way it is.” Our recommendations were accepted in Washington. Like all access crises, that one eventually just blew over.

Q: What was your estimate—and that of the group around you—of Willy Brandt as mayor of West Berlin?

BOEHM: I thought very highly of him. I think that everybody did. I didn't know him that well. I didn't have occasion to deal with him officially, myself. That was done at higher levels. But I would meet him occasionally on social occasions and then I would talk with him for a few minutes. He was also an inspirational figure. He was the right man to have in Berlin at that time.

Q: You've mentioned these various crises and how we dealt with them, but there were also the French and the British. Any unilateral decision on our part would have had a tremendous impact on them. What roles did they play on all of these matters?

BOEHM: Of course, they were co-equals in Berlin and in Bonn. In the various Allied bodies they had an equal voice with us. We placed considerable value on getting Allied unanimity and usually were able to get it. The commandants in Berlin—by which I mean their political deputies, including people like our senior State Department officer and his opposite numbers—were generally in agreement on what was to be done. They took a fairly firm position. They weren't panicked by the Soviets. They'd take a pretty steady position—not an aggressive position, but a steady, firm position, as firm as you could. Each commandant took account of what he thought his own capital would go along with.

From Berlin the US Mission could communicate directly with Washington, and we did so when I was there. That had not always been the case. I think that, at times, everything had had to go to [the Embassy in] Bonn and then from Bonn to Washington. By the time I got there, Berlin was communicating directly with Washington, with an information copy to Bonn, so that Bonn could provide its input. Or, at times, you might want to get Bonn to agree first. You would send a message to Bonn first and then, when they concurred, send it in to Washington. But we had the right to send messages directly to Washington. Bonn could monitor our traffic and then express its views. I don't recall that Bonn ever, on a serious question, sent in a dissenting voice after Berlin had recommended something, because we kept in very close touch with the Embassy.

But the British and the French didn't have that much latitude. I'm not sure about the British, but the French had to communicate with their Embassy in Bonn, which then communicated with Paris. While Paris was very tough on French rights [in Germany], they weren't that much concerned about German rights. So on some issues it was hard to get the French on board, but you had to try.

The air corridor crisis might not have involved the British and French. I can't recall now. We used different air corridors. The corridor we used was the one that went almost directly East and West. The British corridor ran Northwest from Berlin to Hamburg. The French corridor ran Southwest toward Bavaria and Baden. I think it was only our air corridor that was having these problems. What Pan Am did, what we asked Pan Am to do, was basically our affair. If we had decided to take action which might have led to more widespread problems or something really serious, like fighter escorts, for example, we would certainly have had to consult the British and French. We might even have felt that we had to get their concurrence. But in this case we didn't.

Here is another Clay story, to illustrate the character of the man, and his shrewdness, at the same time. Just outside of the American sector of Berlin was a little, what was called an exclave, called Steinstuecken. That is, it was a small area—properly a village—that was part of the West Berlin Burrough of Dahlem. It was separated from Dahlem by 300-400 yards of East Germany. It was just sitting out there in East Germany. It had schoolchildren and was connected [to West Berlin] by a road which ran through East Germany. The road itself was East German. But the people who worked [in West Berlin], while living in Steinstuecken, and the children who went to school in Dahlem could go back and forth. The people could go shopping in Dahlem and buy their food there. Then one day the East Germans cut off Steinstuecken.

Clay decided that he would drive there and open up the road. He decided to go down there very early one morning, around 6:00 or 6:30 AM, and just go on through and ignore any East German police that might be there. He said that nobody was to know this. It's important that the East Germans not be prepared for this. He said, “I want them to be taken by surprise, have no instructions, and not know what to do.” We said that we thought that was a good idea but that we would have to tell the mayor of Dahlem. He'd been very cooperative, and his nose would be far out of joint, since it was his burrough. We thought that we ought to tell him but swear him to secrecy. Clay was extremely reluctant to do this,

but he finally agreed that we could tell the mayor. So we did. Clay arrived at the checkpoint at 6:00 AM, and there was the mayor, his wife, 300 West Berlin schoolchildren, and about 500 East German cops. [Laughter] Clay could instantly see that he had a loser on his hands. He accepted the bouquets and turned around and went back to his headquarters. He didn't try to go through with the program. He saw that it was not going to work.

On the next day he went over by helicopter. This led, of course, to a mini airlift, which went on for months and maybe years, during which Steinstuecken was supported by and communicated with West Berlin by US helicopter. The road was never opened. That situation was only solved years later, when the East and West Germans eventually recognized each other. East Germany then sold that road to West Germany, so the road, which had been part of East Germany, is now part of West Berlin. Steinstuecken was no longer an enclave.

But I wasn't aware of that when I went back to West Berlin in 1990, just when the wall was coming down. I was itching to go to Steinstuecken. I drove to it. I thought that I'd cross to it through East Germany. I came back. The Ambassador in Bonn was then Vernon Walters. He had invited me to stay at his Berlin residence. He was in Bonn or somewhere. I had the whole residence to myself. I told the butler that I had made it to Steinstuecken, fulfilling a long-standing ambition to drive there through East Germany. He said, “That isn't East Germany at all. We bought that road.” [Laughter]

It wouldn't have mattered. By that time the wall was coming down, and East Germany was disappearing. It was a fascinating experience for me.

Q: Does that pretty well end your time in Germany?

BOEHM: Yes. I left in the summer of 1962. Of course, many of these problems continued after that. They'd flare up from time to time—the Autobahn, the air corridor, and so on.

But I can't think of a more thrilling and exciting time to have been there. I had a marvelous time.

Q: OK, we'll pick it up again in 1962 when you came back to Washington.

BOEHM: To INR [Bureau of Intelligence Research and Analysis]. — Q: Dick, you wanted to mention a few things about your private life in West Berlin.

BOEHM: Yes. I think I mentioned earlier, in passing, that it was perhaps the most agreeable post that we had, in terms of family life. At the time I went there my children were 9 and 3 years old. We decided that, although there was an American military school there, we would put them in German schools.

They didn't speak any German, but for the younger child it was no problem. When we say that children learn languages quickly and with no difficulty, we should distinguish between 3-year olds and 9-year olds. It was a struggle for the 9-year old boy. We put him in school in April. It was hard going. By the time the Germans broke for their summer vacation—it's not the same time as ours—I was beside myself. The whole family was in turmoil because he wasn't happy and couldn't communicate with the other kids in school. I said to my wife, “Look, we'd better put him in the American School.” She said, “Well, let's not give up this easily. The American School starts up three weeks after the German School. We'll put him back in the German School, and if nothing has improved, when the American School opens, we'll move him.”

We put him back in the German School. There had been some kind of consolidation process going on in his mind because he clicked right away when he went back to the German School. He spent the rest of his time in Berlin as a happy German schoolboy, with his lederhosen and federhut and his mappe on his back.

So my kids also had a very good, indigenous experience in Berlin, which is a fine place to have one. We were all pretty happy there. It's a good place to live.

Q: Then you came back to INR, where you served from 1962 to 1965.

BOEHM: These were the first three of a four-year Washington tour. I was put into that part of INR which dealt with Western Europe [REU]. A new desk had just been established to cover Berlin and NATO affairs. I was assigned to that. I could see fairly quickly that the combination didn't work—not because there's no logic to it in the external world but because in the organizational structure of INR there already were people working on German affairs, including Berlin. The division between what I was supposed to be doing and what they were supposed to be doing didn't work.

Q: There really isn't much coordination in INR in that area.

BOEHM: Well, there is, up to a point. It depends on what you're talking about. In this case we were in the same office in INR, so we had the power to sort this out. The way it was sorted out was actually my suggestion. I suggested giving Berlin back to the German research people and I confined myself to NATO, which was a very rich field at that time. We had the Skybolt crisis. I don't know whether...

Q: Remind me what the Skybolt crisis was.

BOEHM: Skybolt was a missile which the United States was developing. We had persuaded the British to join us in developing it, as a result of which they had dropped out of a Western European consortium to produce a similar missile. The European project had then collapsed. It was called Blue Water, as I recall. Then, one day, we announced that we were dropping Skybolt. This produced a real crisis, not only in NATO, but in Anglo-American relations at that time. Harold Macmillan was British Prime Minister, and Kennedy was our President. Macmillan insisted on a meeting right away with Kennedy.

Q: It was held in Bermuda, wasn't it?

BOEHM: Yes, in Bermuda. They met. The agreement that was reached there provided for selling the Polaris missile to the British.

Q: This is a submarine launched missile.

BOEHM: A strategic, submarine launched missile. That touched a very sensitive nerve with De Gaulle and with the French. In De Gaulle's mind this merely confirmed that Britain was an Atlantic, a transatlantic power and not a European power. I believe that that set in motion a train of events that led to France pulling its forces out of the military side of NATO, and to France's vetoing British entry into the Common Market.

Q: How did INR see this situation? What were you getting? What would INR's role have been?

BOEHM: INR, in theory at least, gets all of the information, all of the intelligence, whether it's overt or covert, from the newspapers to TOP SECRET stuff. It gets all of that, tries to sort it out, put it together, and basically prepare for the policymakers a picture of what to expect. That is, what has happened, what is happening, and what you can deduce will probably happen, so that we can take this into account in making policy decisions.

I didn't want to go into INR. It sounded to me that it would be deadly dull, but it turned out to be a good assignment. As can happen, it can lead on to other assignments.

Q: What was our view at that time, where were you getting your reports for your analysis about NATO?

BOEHM: Well, you get the Embassy telegrams, you get what is known as code word information, you have newspapers, you have radio broadcasts, you get the transcriptions of foreign radio broadcasts monitored by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service...

Q: FBIS.

BOEHM: If I recall correctly, an FBIS monitoring was how the Department first got the Khrushchev speech which launched destalinization in the Soviet Union. FBIS picked up a radio broadcast. I think that this is the case, though I'm not sure. You have all of the sources of information that come to the United States Government.

Q: Just to get a feel for this, here you were, working on NATO affairs. More or less everyone from the President on down was involved with NATO. The prime ministers were meeting. Nothing in NATO was esoteric the way it would be when we're talking about Bosnia or Rwanda or something like that.

BOEHM: That's quite true. Actually, it's not entirely true, but certainly in the spirit you meant it. After all, what happens in the North Atlantic Council is that 15 representatives of NATO member countries sit down and take positions for their governments. The positions they take at the meetings, of course, are not necessarily public. Many of those meetings are closed, but in the sense in which you intended it, it concerns relatively open material. But what leads up to that position? How is the position which the Germans and/or the French are going to take, as the two of them seem to be developing a special relationship of their own, going to impact on NATO? So your focus is on NATO and the issues before NATO, but you cannot analyze that without knowing what the individual countries are doing.

Q: How did we feel about France at that time?

BOEHM: I think that there was a mixture of feelings about France. I think that INR played a role in the outcome. It's easy to exaggerate the role that you played, but INR played a role in the shaping of government policy in terms of the reaction to De Gaulle and De Gaulle's withdrawal of French forces from NATO. In principle INR doesn't make policy recommendations. However, in practice the INR office or the individual analyst generally feels pretty sure that he knows what we ought to be doing. [Laughter] This can sometimes work its way into the analysis, although in principle it shouldn't.

In any case, INR had reached the conclusion that a strong anti-French or punitive reaction to De Gaulle would not make any sense at all. The NATO alliance would be better served by making the best of it and trying to preserve what relations we could with France, hoping for better things in the future. That was the outcome, of course, that...

Q: Were you able to get the feeling that other people in the French Government held a view something like, "Well, De Gaulle will come and De Gaulle will go, but French interests rest with the West." Did you hear something like that?

BOEHM: The most amusing example of that was not from a French spokesman but from an Italian, who was the new commandant of the NATO Defense College, then located in Paris. He was an Italian Air Force officer named General Fanalli. Just at the time when all of this was going on, Fanalli led the NATO Defense College annual tour of US defense installations. They did what those tours always do. They went to a Minuteman [missile] base, they went to NORAD [North American Air Defense Command], and they ended up in Norfolk, which is the headquarters of SACLANT [Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic], a NATO command. This was at the very end of their tour, and the press went down to interview General Fanalli. They asked him, "General, what do you think about De Gaulle and what he's doing?" Fanalli, whose command of English was not perfect, said, in so many words, "Oh, I'm sure that the French people will regain their normal good sense, eventually." Then they all packed up and went back to Paris to the NATO Defense College.

Of course, none of the American newspapers cared a fig about Fanalli or the NATO Defense College. They weren't covering this, so it wasn't run in the American press. It passed unnoticed in Washington, but some French correspondent picked it up, and it eventually got back to Paris. De Gaulle read about it and said, "Either Fanalli goes or the NATO Defense College goes." France had been logistically supporting the Defense College, and rather handsomely, too.

This caused a tremendous flurry. The Italians came to us and said, “Do something about this. We can't be humiliated in this way.” At first we said, “We'll have to find out what actually happened. We can't go to bat [in support of General Fanalli] if he actually said this. Let's find out if he said this.” Well, how do you find out? By this time I had moved from INR, and it fell to me over in EUR [Bureau of European Affairs] to handle it. It happened that the chairman of the Military Committee of NATO at the time was an American. I contacted him, explained to him what was happening, and said that to decide what position to take and whether we could be helpful to the Italians, we had to know what was said. I asked if there would be, by any chance, a tape recording of General Fanalli's remarks]. He said, “Yeah, there is a tape.” I asked if he could make it available. He said, “I don't want to do anything to hurt Fanalli.” I said, “Look, we want to use this tape only to formulate our position on what we're going to do. We have to know what he said. We're not actually going to use the tape to hurt him, but it will affect our decision on what we do.” “OK,” and gave me the tape. And [it turned out that] General Fanalli had said exactly what he'd been quoted as saying, so at this point we just had to stand back and let the Italians fend for themselves.

Well, they worked it out. They got De Gaulle to agree to give General Fanalli three months' grace. Then they [the Italians] withdrew Fanalli and decided to stick it to the French. They made Fanalli commander of the Italian Air Force! [Laughter]

We found that the reaction to De Gaulle of the French themselves, both the French military and diplomats, was mixed. There were those who would sidle up to our guys at a military meeting and say, “You know, we really don't agree with what's going on. Give us a chance and see whether we can work this thing out.” So there was dissent, but De Gaulle weeded that out very quickly. The dissenters either stopped talking or lost their jobs. We accepted the outcome, and it worked out. France remained in the alliance and only withdrew from the military organization.

Q: They withdrew but they didn't withdraw.

BOEHM: Well, they did. The distinction has to be made between NATO and the North Atlantic Treaty, of which France is a signatory and which was the original structure they remained in. The military organization, NATO, was formed somewhat later, a couple of years after the treaty was signed [in 1949]. They withdrew from that. At the same time they also asked all NATO forces on French territory to go somewhere else. This was kind of a blow to us, because we were the ones principally involved. There were lots of American troops and bases in France, which we had to withdraw. France gave us a year to do this, and we managed to do it.

But it created strategic problems of depth: where would NATO keep its supplies? If you move the supply bases forward, as we did, into Belgium, the Netherlands, and West Germany, you move them closer to the putative enemy [the Soviet Union], and you want to have more depth. But we gave that up, and it all worked out all right.

Q: Where were you when De Gaulle sent his letter to President Johnson, telling us, in effect, that our lease was terminated?

BOEHM: I was in INR.

Q: Did we regard this as a bolt from the blue, or was it expected?

BOEHM: I don't think it was expected. Certainly, De Gaulle had been sending plenty of signals, but, as I recall, I don't think that anyone anticipated that he was going to go that far. However, he did. And then the argument arose—the kind of argument that INR loves—as to whether the provisions of the North Atlantic Treaty meant that the French had to give notice a year before NATO could be told to leave French territory or did it mean that the year begins to run when notice is given. There was disagreement on this, but we had to accept De Gaulle's view on the matter, which was that we had a year to withdraw our forces. French withdrawal from the military structure took effect immediately.

Q: In your position what kind of readings were you getting from the Germans, the Italians, and the British?

BOEHM: Well, everybody was unhappy with what De Gaulle was doing. As for the Germans, Adenauer and De Gaulle had been working toward a special relationship, and the Germans were reluctant to express themselves too vigorously on this subject. But nobody in NATO liked the situation. I think that everybody was unhappy about it.

Q: Were you at all involved in looking at NATO from the military point of view, determining what the Soviet threat was, and what might be the outcome of a Soviet attack at that time?

BOEHM: Of course, we were interested in the outcome of a Soviet attack. What the Soviets might do, what they were planning—this was a judgment which I had to leave to others who were responsible for these matters. That was part of INR called RSB [Office of Research for the Soviet Bloc], as it then was. They were the people who would tell us what they thought the Soviets were probably going to do. You would take account of that judgment in assessing what NATO would do, under various circumstances.

Q: In your analysis, were you receiving judgments about Soviet military effectiveness or were you strictly on the political side?

BOEHM: At that time we didn't have a separate office for military and strategic analysis in INR. That came later. To the extent that that was done at all, we [REU] did that. And of course we had access to the analysis of the CIA and the military intelligence agencies.

Q: I'm just trying to capture the mood of the time. What was your general feeling? Would NATO have held up, or was this...

BOEHM: I think that we probably didn't question the accepted notion that underlay the US reluctance to sign a no-first-use of nuclear weapons pledge. That is, the Soviets had enough conventional forces initially to push NATO back pretty far. There was always a

big dispute as to whether you would give up one inch of territory, that is, whether your planning would include the notion of falling back from the East-West German border. The Germans, of course, were the ones who were right smack in the middle of it. Any retreat meant Germany. We assumed that the Soviets would attack there, on the Central Front, as it was called. The question was whether you fall back as the best strategy or tactics, as the case might have been. Or do you start from the assumption that you're going to hold every foot of NATO territory.

Politically, it was impossible to adopt the notion of abandoning Germany to an advancing Soviet Army. So you always had to start from the assumption that you had to fight to hold every inch of NATO territory. Under those circumstances, what that would have meant, of course, was that you had to use nuclear weapons very early on.

Then you had that whole strategic debate about the use of nuclear weapons. How do you use them? Can there be any such thing as gradual escalation from battlefield weapons or would you have to start right out with a strategic exchange? It was a big, big issue at the time.

Q: When you were in INR, how did you feel about the information you were getting from both the Defense Intelligence Agency [DIA] and the Central Intelligence Agency [CIA]? You were getting information from traditional, diplomatic reporting, the newspapers, and FBIS.

BOEHM: To the extent that it dealt with military matters, orders of battle, and that kind of thing, the Defense Intelligence Agency material was useful to our military. I don't think that it was useful to a political analyst to know which particular Soviet division is deployed in which particular spot, which ones were up to 90 percent strength, and which ones were 50 percent in strength. That was not of central interest to a political analyst. To the extent that DIA got into political analysis, I found their material to be rather derivative. There wasn't

very much original thinking going on. At least, if there was, I didn't find it especially keen or perceptive.

Regarding CIA stuff, CIA had the responsibility of preparing the President's morning reading, which was a digest of all of the important intelligence information received overnight. It would be on the President's desk in the morning, as well as on the desks of the Secretary of State and a few other, senior officials. The other agencies were supposed to have a shot at this material, including INR and, I guess, DIA. CIA would send this material around [the intelligence community] on the wires early in the morning. If you had a comment on it or disagreed with something which they were saying, you could say so. You could even include a footnote to record your disagreement, which would go right into the President's reading. The footnote would say something like, “INR disagrees with this view.” CIA, of course, hated footnotes, so it was a weapon that you could use: threaten a footnote if you wanted to make them change something.

CIA was using all-source material, and very often they were drawing heavily on Embassy cables which had come in overnight, which we had. They would cite the source in the morning reading—Moscow Embassy telegram number so and so. You would have read that yourself. Very often what they were doing was simply rewriting an Embassy cable and, in doing so, sometimes distorting the meaning of it. They didn't just want to quote it verbatim, as they might very well or should have done. They evidently felt that they had to rewrite it to justify their own existence. In rewriting it they might twist the meaning of the cable. That often led to conflict. I can remember calling them up and saying, “You've got to change this, or we'll have to take a footnote.” But to take a footnote, you had to get the authority of the Director of INR, who, when I first went there, was Roger Hilsman and later Tom Hughes. These were two guys who were pretty feisty and willing to take on the CIA if they had to. So they were willing to say, “OK, we'll threaten the footnote. We'll take a footnote if we have to.”

Q: Then you left INR in about 1965 and went to the Bureau of European Affairs.

BOEHM: I said before something about jobs you don't want. The INR job was one I didn't want. Nobody wanted to go to INR, but I had to go. At that time Roger Hilsman was out, beating the bushes to get good people for INR. There was no escaping, once Roger put his finger on you. He had enough clout at that point to keep you, so my feeble efforts to escape from INR had been unavailing. But my three years in INR and my work there had impacted directly on the Bureau of European Affairs [EUR], or EUR/RPM [Regional Political Military Affairs], as the EUR office handling NATO affairs was known then. RPM had gotten to know me and had been reading what I wrote. They wanted to recruit me. So after three years in INR, I moved over to become Officer in Charge of NATO Political Affairs in RPM. Ron Spiers was then the Director of the Office of Regional Political Military Affairs [RPM]. George Vest was his deputy, two officers who later went on to do great things, and two very fine gentlemen, too.

I then worked on NATO affairs in RPM for the next year.

Q: What were your major concerns there?

BOEHM: One of them, just before I moved to RPM, and which probably played a role in my assignment, had to do with the Multilateral Force [MLF]. The Multilateral Force was one of the screwier ideas to come down the pike in a long time. It involved warships carrying nuclear weapons which would belong to NATO, rather than to the US Navy. It would be manned by crews drawn from any NATO country that cared to participate. It would require the agreement of the participating countries before any nuclear weapons or missiles were launched. It was really a nutty idea.

It had been conceived by a group of people associated with George Ball, who was Under Secretary of State, then the number two officer in the Department of State. That position is now called Deputy Secretary of State. This group included the number two man in the Policy Planning Council, Henry Owen, who later moved over to the National Security Council staff, and Bob Schaetzel, who was Deputy Assistant Secretary in the European

Bureau. These were, you might say, the arch Europeanists in the State Department. The motivation behind the Multilateral Force concept was the fear that Germany, unless it was given what was called participation in the control of nuclear weapons, would go its own way and develop its own nuclear weapons.

When this issue came up, I was still in INR, where we saw no prospect of this idea coming to pass. There was no evidence at all that Germany was considering moving in that direction. You couldn't rule out what they might do 20 years in the future, but at that time there was nothing to stop, because there was no impulse in Germany to do that. Secondly, and maybe even more importantly, if there had been such a movement in Germany, a Multilateral Force wouldn't have satisfied any alleged German craving for nuclear weapons. It didn't give them anything. The US still ultimately had to make the decision to launch nuclear weapons. The idea of a Multilateral Force was creating a great deal of unhappiness in NATO. We were dragooning countries to participate in it. We had persuaded the Belgians to be the first to step up and say that they would participate. Other countries were kind of dragging their feet in that direction. The Italians said that they would come in. But nobody really wanted it. I was able to do a couple of research papers in INR which, in effect, opposed the idea. As I said before, you're not supposed to let your personal biases show through. However, it was clear to me that this idea was dopey, and I thought that a good, forthright study of the positions that the various countries had been taking within their own councils and what they were saying privately to our own diplomats needed to be done. We did this. What came out clearly from the two papers I wrote on this subject was that nobody wanted this proposal to go forward. I thought that it was a dumb idea, wasn't going to work, and should be dropped.

That was also the view of the Embassy in London. At that time David Bruce was our Ambassador there. In a way I will not mention, he was aware that this paper was in the works. The paper was ultimately issued. At that time I was still in INR. Also at that time, you needed to get clearance from the geographic bureau on which your paper bore, in order to have it disseminated outside the State Department in Washington. The request

for clearance went to Bob Schaetzel. He didn't like it, of course, but he said, “I don't want to give it the attention it will get if I suppress it,” so he let it go. The paper went to the Embassy in London, and Ambassador Bruce immediately came back with a rare (for him) first-person cable commenting on it. It was the first time in my experience that Bruce had ever commented on an INR paper. His cable to the Secretary of State said that he had just read paper REU report number such and such and he wanted the Secretary to know that he fully agreed with everything in it. [Laughter] Within a week the whole MLF proposal had sunk to the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. I felt good about that and felt that INR could play a role in things.

But I was lucky. I happened to be involved in things that were going on that were of major interest. The people in EUR said that they could use this guy, Boehm. So I moved over to EUR.

It was the political side that I was interested in. There were the consequences of De Gaulle's withdrawal of French forces from NATO and the departure of US forces from France. One of the big issues then was what would we do about the North Atlantic Council, which met in Paris. It consisted of the representatives of the then 15 members of NATO—or 14, or whatever it was. It's changed since then. The North Atlantic Council went right on meeting in Paris after the military organization [NATO] had been expelled from France and its headquarters established in Belgium. Many of the members of the Council were distinguished diplomats from the various countries. They were very happy in Paris. They had been the permanent representatives of their countries for a long time and wanted to continue to live in Paris. The thought of moving didn't appeal to them at all.

In EUR we had concluded that it was politically necessary to move the North Atlantic Council. It was totally unseemly and unsuitable and involved sending the wrong signal to keep the key decision making body of NATO in Paris after what the French had done to the military side of the organization. We targeted the ministerial meeting of June, 1966, as the meeting at which we would try to get agreement. The ministerial meetings were held

in different capitals. The winter meetings of the North Atlantic Council were held in Paris. The summer meetings would rotate among the capitals, and it was Belgium's turn to host the meeting in June, 1966. So that was when we were going to see whether we could get agreement to move the North Atlantic Council out of Paris.

A lot of work had been done in preparation for this effort. The US had to take the initiative and suggest where the Council ought to go. We examined all of the possibilities and concluded that it ought to go to Brussels. The Belgians had agreed to this.

So in June we went to Brussels. The way the drill worked was that you would go to the site of the meeting a day or two ahead of time. The Secretary of State would arrive the day before the meeting was to begin. Dean Rusk was then the Secretary of State. We got to Brussels, I think, on a Saturday. The meetings were to begin on a Monday. We had a delegation meeting on Sunday. Rusk was going to come to Belgium from another place. He'd been on a tour, visiting Japan and other countries and was going to end up in Brussels for this meeting. Rusk came to the delegation meeting right from the airport.

En route to the meeting from the airport he had passed through a demonstration of Belgians waving signs saying, “Yankee, Go Home,” “NATO Out,” and so forth. He arrived at the meeting fresh from that and he said, “You know, I think that even worse than staying in Paris would be moving to Brussels and then being asked to leave after a year or two.” He said, “I'm not sure that we ought to proceed along these lines. Perhaps we ought to go somewhere else.” He then started asking people around the table what they thought. He finally got to me. I was the most junior member of this delegation. Nobody else had said a word. I could see three months of work down the drain. I said, “We've examined the various possibilities. The realistic possibilities would be London, Germany, and Italy, and here are the arguments we found against each one of them.” I told him why we had rejected each of these possibilities. I said that, in any case, Belgium was the only country that had agreed to serve as host to the North Atlantic Council. The British might be willing to host the North Atlantic Council, but there were very strong reasons for not moving off

the continent. What it really boiled down to was Brussels or nowhere. In other words, staying in Paris. He was convinced by that. So he said, “OK, let's stay with Brussels.” And we did.

The Council meeting then produced a NATO agreement to move to Brussels. That was one of the big preoccupations and, of course, another one was always the whole question of Germany, the centerpiece of the Cold War.

Q: You were getting both an INR and an EUR view of Germany. How did we see Germany?

BOEHM: Of course, we were among the very earliest to recognize the importance of Germany and getting Germany to be a full participant in NATO. So we were the big supporter and took a positive attitude toward Germany. The difficult question was not whether you liked West Germany but how you felt about reunification and what you thought should be done, in the name of reunification. The fact was that almost no country in the Alliance, including Germany itself, was prepared to go to war for German reunification. But nobody could say, “Well, forget about reunification.” Reunification always remained a principle to which the Alliance was dedicated. Every time you had a communique after a NATO meeting, German reunification would be mentioned there as a goal, but it was very well understood that nobody was really going to do anything about it. The NATO Alliance would remain a defensive alliance.

So that was how Germany figured. Germany, of course, was the location of most of the NATO forces: the Germans themselves, the Canadians, the British, the French, the Dutch, the Belgians, and ourselves. We all had forces right there in Germany. And Berlin was always an issue.

Q: Did we look upon Germany as our instrument or was Germany...

BOEHM: Germany, of course, had been very responsive to US wishes, but, as I think I mentioned earlier, Germany was looking for a little variety in its foreign policy. It was very strongly interested in its relationship with France. Konrad Adenauer and De Gaulle had cosied up to each other. For Germany a reconciliation with the French had enormous symbolic value in view of the history of relations between those two countries and the wars they had fought. To be accepted by the French and to be clasped to the French bosom had great value for the Germans. So they were doing that.

And at that particular time, given the posture that De Gaulle had adopted toward the Alliance, that inevitably brought some discomfort in Washington. There, again, the question was what we should do about it. Should we allow the Germans to cosy up to the French or not? Wisely, and I think correctly, it was decided that this probably was a good thing. We shouldn't try to interfere with it, even though, at times, it meant that Germany was a less willing rubber stamp to our views than it had been before. Basically, Germany was realistic enough and understood that the United States was the power which really counted in the Cold War. This put limits on the extent to which they would wander out of our orbit.

Q: You'd been in Berlin and sort of looked at the Russians, face to face. During the 1962-1966 period did you see any change in what could be called the Soviet threat?

BOEHM: No, I wouldn't say so. Again, this would depend on what you thought this threat was. My view was—and I think that this was the view in INR and EUR—that the Soviets were not likely to attack the United States unless threatened or attacked themselves. Their main thrust was to hold what they had—the Soviet Empire. Keep it under control and free from threat. Beyond that, they didn't seek to extend their borders Westward. Berlin was the fly in the ointment, of course, because Berlin was right smack in the middle of East Germany. As long as West Berlin was there and free, it was a political problem for the East Germans and a mess for the Soviets. That was one reason why Berlin was such a focal point. I continue to believe that the Soviets never had any serious thought of starting a war

with the West. But they had to do something about this undigested lump in the middle of East Germany.

Q: As you looked at it after you had left Berlin, did you see any possible outcome or change regarding Berlin? Was this just going to remain a lump there?

BOEHM: No. I assumed that we wouldn't let the Soviets and East Germans push us out of West Berlin. We would stay there. If you came right down to it, they were not going to start a war over it.

Q: Then you left EUR in 1966. Where did you go?

BOEHM: I was offered the job of DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] in Luxembourg. Of course, at that stage of my career, to be offered a job as DCM as a relatively junior officer was a happy kind of situation to be in. So I went to Luxembourg.

Q: Who was the Ambassador and how were you...

BOEHM: The Ambassador was the well known figure, Patricia Roberts Harris—Pat Harris—whom I had first become aware of during the 1964 Democratic convention which nominated Lyndon Johnson to succeed himself as President. I remember staying up until early in the morning, watching the umpteenth seconding speech to his nomination. Pat Harris gave one of those. She came on television around 2:00 AM to second the nomination of Lyndon B. Johnson. It was gripping. I was really going to sleep at that time, after a series of speeches and a lot of hot air. All of a sudden, here was this vibrant personality, saying something interesting and trenchant, and I woke up. So I knew of Pat Harris. President Johnson appointed her Ambassador to Luxembourg.

Q: Had you met her before you went to Luxembourg?

BOEHM: Well, of course, she had been back in Washington, and she interviewed me and other candidates for the position of DCM, as well. She invited me to go there as her DCM.

I should warn you ahead of time, Stu, that I'm not going to make any personal comments on any ambassador I ever served as DCM. So don't ask.

Q: Let me try, not in an oblique but rather direct way. As a practical matter, I would like to ask you how they operated, because ambassadors operate in different ways. I'm always interested in personal comments, because I think this shows that foreign affairs are not just a matter of robots going out to a post. There are personalities and real people and all that. But beyond that, there also is the operating style. I wonder if you could comment on that.

BOEHM: I could make some general observations on this. I'm counting now, in my head, the number of ambassadors I worked for as a DCM. There were two in Luxembourg, two in Kathmandu [Nepal], and two in Turkey. I worked for a total of six ambassadors as DCM. Four of these ambassadors were political appointees. Two of them were career people. As far as all of them were concerned, whether they were career or political people, you had to gain their confidence. They have to believe that you are working for them and that you haven't got your own agenda which you're trying to carry out. One difference would be that the career ambassador might know you, though not necessarily. I worked as DCM for a career ambassador I had never met. If the career people don't know you, they know somebody who does know you, and they can find out a lot about you before they actually get you as DCM. They are less likely to be suspicious of you because they figure that you know what the relationship should be.

Political ambassadors, on the other hand, don't start from that position. My own feeling is that they often tend to start from the notion that the career Foreign Service is out to get them, or at least, to control them.

Q: It's a funny thing, because it just isn't true.

BOEHM: It's almost never true. Sometimes the political ambassadors have this perception ahead of time. Sometimes they reach this conclusion later on. I didn't have

that experience. From what political ambassadors for whom I worked as DCM told me about my predecessors as DCM, I could see that some of my predecessors had never gained their confidence. The political ambassador ended up thinking the same thing that he thought at first, that the career DCM was out to subvert him.

The Department is probably at fault for this. I'll tell you why. There's a natural tension between the Department and a political ambassador. The Department thinks that the guy probably doesn't know what he's doing. Except at a really large Embassy, like Germany or the U. K., where the Secretary of State probably has direct contact with the ambassador; in the case of a smaller Embassy, the Department relies on the DCM to steer a political ambassador. The Department in effect tells the DCM, “Look, this ambassador is brand new and doesn't know what he's doing. It's up to you to steer him.” Some DCMs, I regret to say, don't have the tact to handle that.

Q: The diplomatic skills.

BOEHM: They don't have the skills, and the Ambassador might conclude that they're trying to manipulate him or have their own agenda. They may be too blunt in telling him what he ought to do. The first thing you have to do in that situation is to gain the confidence of the political ambassador. Then, when you've done that and he believes that you're there to help him and to make sure that he succeeds in his job—that you're really working for him —he will probably listen to you. If you say, “I really don't think that that's the way we ought to do this” or, “You ought to go and call on so and so,” he'll usually pay attention. However, unless the DCM gains the ambassador's confidence, it's going to be a very bad situation.

Q: You had two political ambassadors...

BOEHM: In Luxembourg.

Q: Patricia Harris and George Feldman. George Feldman came from Malta, where he'd been Ambassador.

BOEHM: George Feldman had been Ambassador once before.

Q: What were their operational styles?

BOEHM: I'm not going to discuss the individuals.

Q: OK. What were the issues in Luxembourg?

BOEHM: There were basically very few issues. Luxembourg was a country which was very favorably disposed to the United States, the country which had liberated it in both World Wars, and also the country that prevented the smaller countries in Western Europe from being dominated by France or Germany. The weight of the United States in the Atlantic Alliance was very beneficial to the small countries. So Luxembourg was very pro-American. There were parades and processions all year long, honoring this or that occasion when the United States liberated this or that town.

Q: You went to Bastogne and other places?

BOEHM: That was in Belgium.

Q: But right next to Luxembourg. I meant places like Echternach and Ettelbruck and so forth.

BOEHM: They had societies devoted to commemorating wonderful things that we had done for them. It was very refreshing.

Q: Were you getting any reflections from them on how they viewed France? The withdrawal of France [from NATO] must still have been reverberating.

BOEHM: It was reverberating for everybody. The Luxembourgers, of course, don't want trouble with any of their neighbors. They don't say much. They don't tend to take strong positions on issues. They just sit back and let other people lead the way. As long as

the United States is in there, they figure that nothing too awful can happen. So they accept whatever decisions come out, which are made by others. They have no illusions about their own place in the world. They know that they are a very tiny power. They don't want to play a power role. So it was a very easy situation for the US Embassy there. But the French posture was not easy for the government of Luxembourg, and they took the position not to take any position. They would support us when they could, which they usually did. But they wouldn't get up in arms and argue with anybody. And they wanted to maintain good relations with France. In Luxembourg the countries which the people needled were the Belgians and the Germans. For Luxembourg, these are the two countries they have perceived historically as leaning on them. The German Embassy really had a hell of a time in Luxembourg.

Q: What were some of the things that happened?

BOEHM: Well, Luxembourg is hypersensitive to anything German, although Luxembourgers are far more German than anything else. Every time a German tourist would come over the border, the Luxembourg cops would give him a speeding ticket, even though he was going 10 miles an hour. They just kept needling the Germans.

The Belgians—well. If you look to see what is going on in Luxembourg, most of the time nothing much is going on. It's a lovely, pleasant place, but not a place where things are happening. So whenever anything comes along, you go to see and do it, whether it's a concert or an exhibition. Well, the Belgians mounted an exhibit of political cartoons, which sounded like a lot of fun. We were looking forward to it. They opened it in the town of Esch, in southern Luxembourg. It never got to the capital because it turned out that some of the cartoons had been drawn by a Belgian who was supposed to have been a Nazi collaborator during World War II. The Luxembourg press made a tremendous thing out of it, and the Belgians withdrew the exhibit. We never got to see it.

That was the kind of thing that happened. They were always looking for some club to beat the Belgians and Germans with.

Q: But there was no "Americans, Get Out" or "Americans..."

BOEHM: Well, you would get the occasional demonstration. There was a Communist Party there, which was active, anti-NATO, and anti-American. The Vietnam War, which was going on at the time I was there, did produce some demonstrations by kids—youth, teenagers—who marched up to the American Embassy carrying signs denouncing our policies in Vietnam. Vietnam was the one sour note, I would say, in US-Luxembourg relations, as it was with many other countries.

Q: Well, you left Luxembourg in 1968 and went to the War College. Is that right?

BOEHM: Well, I had to leave there in 1968 because of a family illness. It should have been a three year tour, but I had to cut it short and return to the United States in 1968 and went to the War College.

Q: Which one did you go to?

BOEHM: I went to the War College at Ft. McNair, the National War College.

Q: How did you find that as a training experience?

BOEHM: In view of what I'd been doing for some time, which basically was political-military stuff—and this was true of Luxembourg, too...

Q: Right in the heart of NATO.

BOEHM: A lot of it was not new to me. At the same time—well, let's be honest about this. For me it was really a matter of where they could put me for a year while I sorted out some family health problems. I think that the thought was that I might be able to contribute

something, since I had some knowledge of Berlin and the focal points of military thinking at the time. So that was fine, when I was there.

Q: You were there from 1968 to 1969, which put you right up in the situation where the Vietnam War was a major consideration. They were talking about the Tet offensive and other things. How did that impact on you? What was your impression of how our military looked at Vietnam?

BOEHM: You've put your finger on an important point. Our military were obsessed with Vietnam—for good reasons. Many of my military classmates were just back from tours in Vietnam. They were at the lieutenant colonel-colonel level from the various services. I'd say that the majority of them had had Vietnam experience and Vietnam tours of duty. There was a very, very strong anti-press feeling among my classmates. They tended to hold the press responsible for our failure to adopt the appropriate policies in Vietnam. My classmates would have liked to see a much stronger policy applied—though not all of them. Some of them were outstanding people who had made a political analysis of Vietnam and tried to remain dispassionate in their view of Vietnam. Most of them, I would say, were rather obsessive about Vietnam. They understandably regarded how we were doing things in Vietnam as a big, black eye for the military, because it was a flop. Let's face it. We didn't deliver. The military recognized that they had both hands tied behind their back, and they felt that they were wrongly being held responsible for a failed policy. So they were very upset and very emotional. When you got a discussion started on Vietnam, the roof would fly off.

Q: Well, did you find, as a State Department person, that you were sort of pushed into a corner by being from the organization responsible for getting them into it?

BOEHM: No, I don't think that there was any particular tendency to hold the State Department responsible. However, depending on what your views were, you could find yourself sort of in conflict with your classmates. I couldn't voice my real feelings when I

was abroad, of course. At that time everybody in every Embassy around the world was being told by Washington, “Get out there in public and tell people that our policies in Vietnam are the right ones.”

Q: I had to go out in Yugoslavia to Communist Party headquarters to explain our policies on Vietnam. [Laughter] They were nice about it.

BOEHM: I had it a lot easier. I had to do it in Luxembourg, which, of all the countries in the world, was one of the least inclined to challenge our policies. If you talked to the resident Americans, the business people, you'd find that they didn't like our policies in Vietnam, either. They'd give you a good kick. We were all doing that abroad. But when you were back at the National War College, you don't need to do that. You can speak your mind. From the very beginning my view was that we had no business at all being in Vietnam and that it didn't serve any U. S. interest. And I would say so at the National War College, which would produce fireworks with some of my classmates. Others agreed with me. I think that most of my military colleagues by that time had reached a state of emotion in which they didn't really care why we were there or whether we should have been there. The fact was that they were the ones in there, they were the ones taking a licking, and they were the ones who were being scorned by everybody. So the question, “Should we have been there to begin with?” was beside the point to them.

Q: Well, you left the National War College in 1969. What were you doing?

BOEHM: I still had to stay in the United States then. I was assigned to the Bureau of Economic Affairs in the State Department. Phil Trezise was then the Assistant Secretary of the bureau. I had met him in Luxembourg. He'd gone there for a meeting and he'd asked me to serve as his interpreter at a meeting with the Luxembourgers. It was a French-English interpretation job. I guess that he may have liked my style. He asked me to be his public affairs officer when I left the National War College. I said that I didn't know much about economics and that I wasn't an economist. He said, “That's exactly what I want. I

want someone to articulate our policies in a way that people who are not economists can understand. So take the job." I took the job.

The Public Affairs Office in the Bureau of Economic Affairs was a small office. There was myself, one junior officer, and a secretary. Before long the junior officer was transferred for budgetary reasons. Personnel slashes were going on all over the place. It wasn't much of a job. We weren't saying anything about anything. What was being said was being said by the Secretary of State. By that time we'd established the position of Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, whose relationship to the Assistant Secretary of the bureau was uncertain. The Assistant Secretary tried to retain his autonomy and not report to the Under Secretary. It worked out because their personal relations were all right. At least, during my time they generally were.

Q: It doesn't sound like...

BOEHM: No. Too many people and not enough willingness to say things in public. There were lots of things that were happening, but you didn't want to talk about them. The big issue then was textiles, with Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Korea closely involved. By that time Japan was getting out of the textile business. The smaller and very dynamic countries of East Asia were selling vast quantities of textiles to the United States, and, of course, that was a big political issue in the United States.

Q: So you left the Economic Bureau in 1971, after this.

BOEHM: On personal reflection up until that point my career in the Foreign Service was Europe-oriented, apart from my first tour in Okinawa. That was fine with me. I thought that Europe would be a terrific place to spend your whole career in the glittering capitals of the Old World. I was headed in that direction, although the personnel system in the Department never accepted Europeanism as a specialty. You had Arabists, you had

Sinologists, Japanologists, but theoretically there were no Europeanist—except that there were, in fact.

Q: There were.

BOEHM: Unofficial though it was, there were people who went from Rome to Paris to London to Madrid. I wanted to be one of that group. It sounded like a good idea to me.

However, I was sidetracked, as I say, by this difficult family medical situation. In 1971 my wife died. The time came for me to go back overseas. I wanted a complete change. I wanted to go someplace that was different.

The job of Political-Military Counselor in Turkey fell vacant, and the Ambassador to Turkey then was Bill Handley, who had started out as a Labor Officer and had done time in USIA [United States Information Agency]. Then he had been a Deputy Assistant Secretary in the State Department bureau which included Turkey, then NEA [Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs], not EUR. And then Bill Handley had gone to Turkey as Ambassador. He was back in Washington, looking for a Political-Military Counselor. I was available. I had a place on a river in the backwoods of the western part of the State of Virginia, over in Bath County, near Warm Springs, VA. I was down there. There was no phone. The mailbox was two miles away, across the creek and up the hill. I went up one day to the mailbox, and there was a telegram in it, waiting for me. It was rainsoaked and had been in there a couple of days. It said that the Ambassador to Turkey is back in Washington and would like to interview you. Give us a call. So I went to the nearest phone, said that I had just received the message and that I was interested in the job. I said that I would make a suggestion which might be totally improper: if the Ambassador is a fisherman and has the time and would like it, I would be happy to invite him to come down and spend a couple of days fishing. However, if, for one reason or another, that is not acceptable, I would come up to Washington. They said, “Call us in a couple of hours.”

So I drove around, did some shopping, and called them back. They said that the Ambassador would have been absolutely delighted to come down but can't. He has to leave town tomorrow morning for California. So could you come in? Well, I drove right to Washington. Bill Handley and I hit it off very well and he hired me on the spot. So I went to Turkey. That was the beginning of moving in a totally different direction, although while I was in Ankara, Turkey was moved into the European Bureau.

Q: As a matter of fact, it was sort of interesting that you moved into the European Bureau just when the Cyprus crisis hit the fan. I have had accounts of people who dealt with this. They said that the Europeanists didn't like to deal with this grubby business down there. This wasn't their type of thing. But we'll come to that. What was the situation in Turkey when you arrived there in 1971?

BOEHM: Six months earlier the Turkish military had taken over the country. They had not actually displaced the government, as they did later on. We'll get to that later on. They left the Parliament in place. They got rid of the Prime Minister. They appointed a Prime Minister, so there was some appearance of ordinary, democratic procedures, although in fact the country was being run by the military. They gave various reasons as to why they had taken over. There might have been some element of counter-terrorism involved in the takeover, but there was also a kind of threat to the military. The then Prime Minister was Mr. Demirel, who is now the President of Turkey as we sit here. There were questions about the military budget, and the General Staff was flexing its muscles. The psychology has changed since then, but at that time the General Staff wanted to make sure that everything was to their satisfaction.

There had been some terrorism, which might have given the General Staff some reason to take over, but I wasn't there at the time—six months earlier. I knew very little about Turkey when I went there. I'd been looking at Turkey as a part of NATO, when I was on the NATO desk, five years earlier. But it wasn't the central preoccupation of anybody on the NATO

political side. Turkey was a matter of concern for the American military, because Turkey occupied a strategic position.

However, the situation was that it was a country run by the Turkish military, although it did not have a military government. Democratic procedures ostensibly were left in place, but, in fact, they had been suspended.

Narcotics was a very big issue. Turkish sources had been one of the main suppliers of heroin to the United States. The whole French connection issue involved Turkey, with heroin moving through Marseille. For the Ambassador one of his chief concerns was to get them to suppress the cultivation of opium poppies, of which Turkey had been a major producer.

Always, of course, there were Greek-Turkish squabbles going on. The Cyprus issue came up during my stay there.

Q: You were the Political-Military Counselor, so you were dealing with the Turkish military quite a bit.

BOEHM: Yes, with the Turkish military and with those in the Turkish Foreign Ministry who dealt with those matters. Just as we do, they had a bureau of political-military affairs.

Q: As you had come from Europe, what was your impression of the official Turks that you dealt with?

BOEHM: They were very, very high caliber people.

Q: On the military side as well?

BOEHM: Both sides. They were very nationalistic. You couldn't make any distinction between the Turkish military and the Foreign Office people on that score. They were very Kamalist in the sense that...

Q: We're talking about Kamal Ataturk.

BOEHM: We're talking about Ataturk. They were all dedicated to the principles of Ataturk. They were highly competent. I think that the Turkish Foreign Ministry produces some of the best diplomats in the world. They are hard working, well briefed, and well documented. I found them very tough. A lot of my time in Turkey was spent, negotiating what later came to be called The Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement. There was this basic agreement and then a whole string of sub-agreements which provided the framework in which the United States carried on various kinds of military and other activities in Turkey. It was an old agreement which was extraordinarily favorable to the United States. Eventually, the Turks wanted to revise it. One of the provisions of the agreement allowed for its eventual renegotiation.

At the time I went there, talks [on renegotiation of the agreement] had been going on for a long time between the Embassy and the Foreign Ministry. Just about the time I got there, the Turks said, “We want to make this a formal negotiation. Let's not have any more of these talks but let's negotiate.” They had the right to do that under the agreement, so we had no choice but to agree. I spent the next three years, very heavily occupied in renegotiating the agreements with the Turks.

The original agreement had one key provision: while it provided for renegotiation and revision, it said that until new agreements had been negotiated, the provisions of the old agreements would continue in force. So the Turks were stuck with that. They couldn't simply repudiate the old agreements. They were stuck with continuing to honor the provisions of the old agreements.

Our position was a combination of political and military objectives. The Pentagon was very much involved. The team I led in the negotiations consisted of more military than Embassy people. We had a big military establishment in Ankara. They had a whole section in the

military mission devoted to this negotiation process. So I drew very heavily on them for staff and for membership in the delegation.

The delegation would vary according to what the subject was. There were communications people who would sit in when we were talking about the communications agreement. There were all kinds of other people involved. We had engineers and we had real estate people, if we were talking about base construction. So the delegation changed in composition from one week to the next. But it was a long, hard process. An arm of the Pentagon was involved. The State Department was involved. So there was a lot of very heavy military interest.

Q: What were the main sticking points?

BOEHM: I might sum it up this way. There was no one sticking point. They all fell under the same rubric: there was the desire of the Turks that US military operations in Turkey should clearly reflect Turkish sovereignty in Turkey. This was opposed to the US posture of seeking to ensure maximum operational flexibility. You find this attitude expressed by our military not only in Turkey but elsewhere, because I've been involved in these things in other countries. This means not having to go through too many channels, not having to get too many permits, having the ability to make a decision and do what we want to do on our own base or with our own planes, and flying here, there, or elsewhere. An easy way to sum it up would be this: if you have a military air base in a foreign country, do we have to get permission from the local government to fly someplace, or does a simple notification serve the purpose? If notification is sufficient, do you have to notify three days ahead of time, or can you take off and notify at the same time? That issue, in some ways, epitomizes the problem: who is running this place, anyway? The Turks felt that Turkey was Turkish and that they were running Turkey, and that US operations there had to conform with and illustrate the fact that Turkey was sovereign. Our feeling was, “What's the good of having these military facilities here if we can't run them efficiently? We have to have an agreement that works.”

Q: Were you running across a Turkish mind set? Back in the Ottoman Empire, they had this practice of extending concessions under which people had extraterritorial rights. This was a sign of weakness.

BOEHM: Very much so. The Turks would never say that, of course, but there was no question in our mind that the Turks were thinking of the arrangements, called capitulations, which the Ottoman Empire had granted to various foreign powers regarding who ran the banking system, the post office, and everything else. That was undoubtedly in the mind of the Turkish negotiators, who were uncomfortable with our presence and the freedom with which we exercised our presence there. So, yes, that was certainly a fact of life.

Q: You were saying that the Turkish military were tough. At the same time...

BOEHM: Not just the military. The diplomats were very hard and tenacious negotiators.

Q: I would think that the Turkish military would understand the need for operational flexibility to do things.

BOEHM: At times they did. I would say that on certain issues—I can't think of any specific matter—the Turkish Foreign Ministry people were much tougher than the Turkish military, because the Turkish military did understand that on certain things you had to have a certain amount of flexibility. But the Foreign Ministry wasn't interested in that. They were interested in asserting Turkish sovereignty. So military flexibility was a matter of indifference to them. You could explain the issue from now to kingdom come, but they wouldn't move from their position.

So during three years of doing this, we didn't negotiate a single agreement. We agreed to drop one or two which had been outdated and no longer counted in the real world.

Q: In talking with other people about base negotiations and so forth in other countries I've understood that they've always had trouble. For the State Department the real problem was the Pentagon lawyers, more than anything else.

BOEHM: They were a pain in the neck.

Q: These people have no idea of local conditions or anything else. Their whole idea is, "Don't give an inch, don't do anything. We've got the agreement and..."

BOEHM: There was an office in the Pentagon—it's still there. At one time I think it was called the Office of Foreign Base Rights. It had a lawyer's approach that was, in many ways, inappropriate. There were certain points we could have made concessions on, but the Pentagon lawyers would always say, "Well, if we give that to the Turks, we're going to have to give it to the Japanese and others." So they wouldn't make a distinction between one country and another, and you can understand their position. They had a point. If you make a concession to one country, other countries will find out about it and will want the same. A Political-Military most favored nation position, you might say.

Q: What was the attitude of the Embassy and of the various Turks you were dealing with toward the Soviet threat? I keep coming back to this.

BOEHM: The Turks, of course, have their own history with Russia, which goes back hundreds of years. There have been seven, eight, nine wars between Turkey and Russia. The Turks won the first few wars and then they began to lose them. Turkey regarded Russia then—and, I'm sure, still does—as a major threat. As recently as the time of World War I, the Russians drove their forces to a point halfway to Ankara. So NATO is very important to Turkey, and Turkey had no doubt that NATO meant the United States.

Q: You were in Ankara at a time when the colonels took over the government in Greece. I was Consul General in Athens at this time. When the Greeks are in doubt, they spend most of their time raising the specter of the Turks, which is very good, domestic policy. It

is like waving the bloody shirt. How did the Turks—both in the Foreign Ministry and in the military—view the Greeks at this particular time?

BOEHM: To some extent the Greeks have always puzzled me in this context. Not really, since I know where they're coming from. The Turks were kind of mildly annoyed every time that the Greeks would stand up and yap at them. It was kind of like a Great Dane or St. Bernard or Anatolian sheep dog being attacked by a Chihuahua. Any time a Turkish plane would take off and fly anywhere near the Aegean Sea, the Greeks would scream that their airspace had been invaded, because they regarded the Aegean as their sea.

In any case, the Greeks kept it up, but there never was any serious intent which I could discern in Turkey to do anything nasty to Greece. However, the Greeks really don't like the Turks. There's an ancient hostility there. After all, Greece was part of the Ottoman Empire for hundreds of years, and the Greeks fought very hard to free themselves from it. As you mentioned before, the Turks have this almost racial, ethnic memory of the capitulations. For their part the Greeks have a memory of having been absorbed into the Ottoman Empire. So it's understandable. They are very sensitive about Turkey and see threats where there are none.

Q: But the Turkish preoccupation is really elsewhere?

BOEHM: Yes. They were not interested in doing anything to Greece. At the same time the Turks didn't want to be hemmed in by Greece, which would attempt to take the Aegean Sea and say, “You can't come in here,” because the Turks would then be unable to get out of Turkey.

Russia—the Soviet Union—was the problem for the Turks. That was what the Turks were worried about. After all, you had the Soviet Black Sea Fleet constantly passing through the Turkish Straits. The Russians historically have wanted to dominate the Turkish Straits, and

they still had this desire during the time I was in Turkey. It is a major concern of the Turks to maintain complete control of the Turkish Straits.

Q: Did the Turks pay much attention to the Middle East? It is an Islamic country, although secular in outlook. Did they pay much attention to squabbles in the area, like the difficulties involved with Iran and Palestine?

BOEHM: While I was there, they weren't paying much attention to those issues. Later, they did.

Q: The Arab-Israeli War of 1973 occurred while you were there, involving Syria, Egypt, and Israel. Did that...

BOEHM: The Turks really didn't want to get involved in that. They weren't interested in it. They didn't regard themselves as part of some Islamic force that had to support their brothers.

Q: What about Iran? At that time we were heavily arming Iran during the Nixon-Kissinger period. One of their policies was to give the Shah of Iran virtually anything that he wanted. Were the Turks at all uncomfortable with all of the arms and equipment we were selling to Iran?

BOEHM: Not in terms of a threat from Iran. The Turks, I think, were uncomfortable about the fact that they weren't getting as much as they felt they needed. They saw us dumping all of this equipment—huge amounts of aid to Israel and, later on, Egypt. And, at that time, Iran. I think that the Turks felt that their needs were greater and that the justification for supplying Turkey outweighed anybody else.

Q: How about Iraq? Was this a problem?

BOEHM: No, there was very little attention paid to it. One didn't think much about this. An occasional Turk would eye Kirkuk and Mosul and say, “Gee, we really made a mistake about letting all of that oil go.” And Turkey was oil short.

Q: What about the Kurds? Was that a problem?

BOEHM: They were always a problem. During the period of the military take-over in Turkey, which was in place throughout most of my first tour in Turkey, the Kurdish situation was relatively quiet, but it was there. I think that, perhaps, the fact that the military were in power helped to keep things quiet. One of the prime ministers appointed by the generals, who had been Defense Minister, a man named Ferit Malen, was a Kurd. There were Kurds participating in the Turkish government system, although they did not go around proclaiming that they were Kurds. They were ethnically Kurds. But while the Kurdish problem continued to exist—and I'm sure that there was a lot going on in terms of keeping the Kurds under control which we never heard about—it wasn't a major issue.

A much bigger issue—always—was the Armenian question. This was a big issue.

Q: Could you talk about it?

BOEHM: Well, that wasn't an issue for the Turks. It was an issue for the Armenians —especially the Armenian Americans. During my first tour in Turkey, as I recall it, the Armenians launched a very bloody episode in Turkish history. Armenians [in the United States] assassinated the Turkish Consul General in Los Angeles and his deputy, after inviting him to address their meeting. The two Turkish officials had gone to address the meeting at the invitation of the Armenians. This was a very nasty matter. Then this kind of thing began to happen elsewhere in the world.

Q: There was a so-called Armenian Liberation Army?

BOEHM: The ASALA, as it was called: the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia. There were other Armenian groups as well which were systematically killing Turkish diplomats all over the world.

Q: This has continued. One Turkish diplomat was killed just two days ago.

BOEHM: I've tried to pin that down. My brother-in-law told me yesterday that he'd heard this on the radio. I listened to the news and couldn't find it.

Q: It supposedly happened in Athens, as I recall it.

BOEHM: It might not have been Armenians who did it. It might have been Kurds. The Kurds have been trying, with less success than the Armenians, to kill Turkish diplomats.

Q: It must have been a major problem for you. Did this assassination of the Turkish Consul General [in Los Angeles] happen when you were in Turkey?

BOEHM: Yes. It caused a crisis in Turkish-American relations. We had to decide what to do. With these two assassinations you could say that the Turks understood that this was the first time that it had happened. What they wanted, then, was a follow-up in the form of security measures for Turks in the United States. This exceeded what Washington was willing to do or could do, because of our federal system. We looked for ways that we could deal with this problem. After all, our government does have responsibilities for foreign diplomats and consuls within its territory. We had to do something and so we made a big thing out of sending a special airplane to carry the bodies back to Turkey, accompanied by a senior official. There were all sorts of ways of showing regret and atonement. But we couldn't go as far as they wanted us to in terms of security measures to protect Turks in the United States. They had honorary consuls all over the place, for example. They wanted protection for them. The federal government couldn't do that. An honorary consul in Boston, say, has to go to the authorities in Massachusetts. If they're willing to assign

a cop to their homes, they will. If not, they won't. And the federal government can't do anything about that—at least this is the position that we were taking.

We were never able completely to satisfy the Turks regarding the measures that we were taking within the United States. But we were able to do enough so that these murders did not cause a serious rift in relations.

Then, of course, the locus of the assassinations began to change—eventually to Western Europe. That was later on. People you knew, people who had been in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during your tour, were getting killed. It seemed to me, at times, that I was spending one day a week, going down to a funeral in the street outside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a Turkish diplomat who had been assassinated. So that situation got rather nasty.

Q: What was your view, from Ankara, of the Armenian-American lobby? Was this a political problem which we couldn't deal with very well?

BOEHM: The Turks couldn't deal with it, and, therefore, we couldn't deal with it. What the Armenians wanted was several things, or at least several things that they said that they wanted, if you could believe that they really wanted them. They wanted the Turks to admit that they had carried out an act of genocide [in 1915] and to compensate them for it. Beyond that there were those Armenians who wanted a return of property, including land, for the re-creation of Armenia in its ancient territory. I had difficulty imagining any Californian of Armenian extraction going to live in eastern Turkey.

Q: In fact I've heard interviews with Armenians saying that we want this and that. These were Armenian-American professors at universities in California. When they were asked, "Do you want to go and live there," they made clear that they wanted to carry on their teaching in the U. S. They felt that it was better to continue to teach in California.

BOEHM: So that coming generations will know that there are Armenians, even though they won't move to Armenia. Anyway, to return to the point. This is something that happened. The Turks were unwilling to admit that they had carried out atrocities and acts of genocide against the Armenians, although, over a period of time, from the 1890's on into the 1920's, bad things had happened to Armenians. But regarding the main event, in 1915 or thereabouts, the Turks denied that they had systematically sought to exterminate or kill off as many Armenians as possible. They argued that the Armenians had brought on themselves the necessity of moving them, because they had been collaborating with Turkey's enemies during World War I. Therefore, the Turks said, they had had to move them out of strategically important territory. The Turks admitted that perhaps in the course of moving them some of them had suffered tragic fates. However, the Turks claimed, there was no policy decision to let them die, even though they were marched hundreds of miles across very forbidding country.

So that was the Turkish position. They said that the Armenians had done some awful things to the Turks. During my second tour there the Turks opened up a museum designed to show the awful things that the Armenians had done to the Turks. So there was very little give in the Turkish position. I also think that in the Turkish mind there was the fear—they would never quite admit this, but I think that it was a consideration—that if they did admit responsibility for what happened to the Armenians, they would have had to pay a staggering amount of money in compensation. So they wouldn't do it.

They decided, however, that they would publish the Turkish records on the Armenian question, and they set to work on it. We said, “Why don't you hurry up and do it quickly and get this question fully ventilated?” The Turk who was in charge of this effort said to me, “You don't understand what these Ottoman archives are like. They consist of shoe boxes with scraps of paper, all over the place. They've been neglected for 60 years. They're mouse-eaten and worm-eaten. They're very hard to deal with. It's not as if they were on a computer and you could just publish them. So it's taking a long time.” But the Turks began

to publish the Armenian archives. There was alleged to be one key document, which was said to be an instruction sent by telegram, from the Interior Minister in Ankara to the local military commander, which said, in effect, “Kill all the Armenians,” though not in so many words.

The Armenians have always claimed that this was an instruction which was actually sent and that it proves their case. The Turks have said, “We've searched all the archives, and there is simply no trace of any such message. We deny that such a message was ever sent.” So there was a lot of that going on. There was a total reluctance on the part of the Turks to admit any responsibility or guilt, and there was an insistence on the Armenian side that they...

Q: Were you feeling any political pressure from California Congressmen?

BOEHM: Oh, yes. Absolutely. During my second tour in Turkey one of the issues which we had, talking about the Armenians, was that, when the Holocaust Museum was being planned, here in Washington, the Armenians wanted to have a corner of it for their own genocide. The Turks heard about it and made a big issue out of it. They said, “You can't do this to us. Are we friendly countries or are you going to declare war on us?” We said, “Look, you have to understand that this is not a government project. This is a private activity, and we have no control over it.” They said, “Aren't you giving them the land to build this museum?” We would reply, “Well...and...” and so forth.

We would say, “Look, you have relations with Israel. Why don't you get your Israeli contacts to communicate with leading Jews in the United States who are raising the funds and planning this memorial.” Up to a point we would let Jewish groups, which were handling this thing, know that there would be a very bad reaction back in Turkey if the Armenians had a part of the Holocaust Museum. There were some people in the Jewish groups which were planning the museum who saw that point and would have liked to back away from it. The matter was still under discussion when I left Turkey. I recently visited the

Holocaust Museum but couldn't go to the upstairs part of it. I hadn't made arrangements ahead of time. If you just go there, you can see the part that's always open. But to go to the other part, you have to make arrangements in advance, and I hadn't done that.

However, I think that I've heard that somewhere in the Holocaust Museum there is an Armenian section.

Q: I went through there quickly and I am just not sure.

BOEHM: I could be wrong but I've heard that there is a small Armenian exhibit.

Q: You left Ankara when?

BOEHM: I left there in August, 1974.

Q: Let's talk about July 14 or whenever it was.

BOEHM: You were still in Athens then?

Q: I had left Athens on July 1, 1974. Can you talk about how the Cyprus crisis appeared to you?

BOEHM: Oh, yes. First of all, it hit me in terms of personal plans. I had been planning to leave Ankara on about July 15. By that time we had a new Ambassador.

Q: William Macomber.

BOEHM: Macomber had arrived in Ankara. This was during my first tour in Ankara. Ambassador Macomber had been there for a while. The Cyprus crisis began, and Ambassador Macomber asked me to defer my departure, saying that it was not a good time to leave. The DCM, Jim Spain, was also supposed to be leaving at that time. Jim Spain was also asked to postpone his departure. Of course, we both did.

The situation was a very interesting one and was developing very quickly. Things were happening in Cyprus which had to produce some kind of Turkish reaction.

Q: You're talking about...

BOEHM: We're talking about the colonels who were running Greece at the time. They were trying to implement a policy of enosis, that is, the annexation of Cyprus by Greece. This was unacceptable to the Turks. An obstacle in the path of the Greek leaders was the President of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios. So the Greek leaders overthrew him. They sent some pawns of theirs—Grivas, I think, was behind this. They attacked the Presidential Palace. Makarios managed to slip out and got away. Then they appointed a well known goon, a bloodthirsty type.

Q: Samson, was it?

BOEHM: Samson.

Q: He was a real thug.

BOEHM: Yes. The colonels installed him in the Cyprus Presidential Palace. That was what touched off the Turks. The Turks said: “You know, we've been following this question very, very closely, and we knew the minute that they installed Samson in Cyprus, we were going to have to move in. We simply couldn't accept that. This is a bloodthirsty man.”

Q: Could you do this a bit more in sequence. Makarios was overthrown but escaped. What was our Embassy in Ankara doing at that time?

BOEHM: You're really testing my memory on this point. I was packing up my effects. [Laughter] We were watching the situation. We didn't want the Greeks and Turks to get into a fight. Of course, we didn't want the Turks to intervene in Cyprus with armed force. Years before, the famous Johnson letter had virtually ordered the Turks to stay out of

Cyprus, at a time when Turks were being killed on that island. We had thought that the Turks were ready to move in then. President Johnson sent a letter to Prime Minister Ismet Inonu of Turkey and said, “If you move into Cyprus and the Russians then attack you while you are doing that, we don't consider that NATO guarantees apply.” And the Turks dropped their preparations. Incidentally, they never forgave us for that. They were still incensed about the Johnson letter and still had bruised feelings throughout the time that I was there. I have no doubt that they still feel hurt about it today.

There wasn't going to be any second Johnson letter, but we didn't want the Turks to go into Cyprus. They didn't say that they would. They were watching the situation very carefully, because they didn't want another slaughter of the Turks, which they anticipated if things developed further, after Samson took over in Cyprus.

Joe Sisco was then the Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs in the Department. He went out and made a brief visit to Greece and Turkey. When he visited Athens and Ankara, he told everybody to cool off. When Sisco was leaving Turkey—I think that he was at the airport—we learned that the Turks had invaded Cyprus. [Laughter]

Q: Someone I was interviewing was saying that they were on a plane on this shuttle visit. They got on the plane—I think that it was in Ankara—and learned about the invasion. They wondered where to go next. They had run out of options.

BOEHM: Sisco's mission was a flop. The Turks moved in.

Q: Were the Turks telling you what they were going to do, or not?

BOEHM: No, they didn't. A lot of interesting things were happening. The Turks called us up one day and told us [in Ankara], “We've drawn a line in the water. If the Greek Navy crosses that line on the way to Cyprus, we're going to hit them.” Then they called us and said, “There's a Greek warship on the way [to Cyprus]. It's going to cross that line, and we're going to hit it.” Our Ambassador got on the phone to Athens and said, “What about

this? Tell the Greeks, for God's sake, not to send it." Embassy Athens got back in touch with our Ambassador and said, "The Greeks tell us that there isn't any ship on the way to Cyprus. They haven't got a ship going to Cyprus." So Ambassador Macomber got on the phone to the Turkish Prime Minister, Bulent Ecevit, and said, "I'm telling you, there's no Greek ship on the way." So Prime Minister Ecevit said, "That's what you think. There's a Greek ship going to Cyprus, and it's going to cross that line. We're going to let it have it." The Greek ship crossed the line, and the Turks sank it. It turned out to be a Turkish warship. [Laughter] It was a beautiful example of non-communication between the Turkish Navy and Air Force. The Turkish Air Force sank a Turkish Navy ship.

But the Turks moved into Cyprus, and they took a piece of the northern part of the island. They stopped for a while and then they moved again. They eventually wound up holding about one-third of Cyprus.

Q: What were you doing?

BOEHM: First of all, when we recognized the possibility that the Turks might invade Cyprus, we urged them not to do it. But they did. They ignored us. Then we tried to get them to stop their advance. There was a big question about what they were going to do when they got to Nicosia airport. The UN, of course, had had peacekeeping troops in Cyprus for years already. They were lined up at the airport, and the Turks were advancing on the airport. The big message to the Turks was, "Don't attack the UN troops. The UN troops are going to stay there and hold their line." The Turks stopped on the north side of the airport, and they've been there ever since.

Q: Were all of the lines of communication broken between our Embassy in Ankara and the Turkish military?

BOEHM: No. We always had contact with them, but, of course, they might be hard to reach at any given moment. They might not want to talk to us at a specific point in time.

Once they invaded Cyprus, all we could say, “Gee, we wish you hadn't done this. Please stop as soon as you can. When are you going to get out?” They haven't done this yet.

Q: What was the Turkish attitude toward the Americans?

BOEHM: The Turks' attitude was, “You stopped us once before. We should have moved ahead then in Cyprus. We have a right to do so.” They cited the London and Paris agreements which created the Republic of Cyprus as giving them the right to move in to protect the constitution. They said that the constitution had been violated, and there was a certain amount of truth to that. So the Turks argued that what they were doing was legal. Of course, Greece has never accepted that notion. We have more or less taken the position that we don't want to get into a discussion of what's legal or not. We said, in effect, let's see if we can get the Turks to cut down the number of their forces or get out. But they have not done so.

Q: Did you feel at this particular point—and this will come up later on—with things happening so fast that the Greek Lobby was not a particular problem? We were doing what we would have done anyway—or was the Greek Lobby an issue at this particular point?

BOEHM: What do you mean, “doing what we would have done anyway”?

Q: We wanted to keep two NATO allies from going at each other. Later, it turned into an almost domestic, political issue [in the US] with the Greek Lobby in action. I take it that, by the time that you were there, things were moving so fast that it probably didn't...

BOEHM: It was said that the Greek Lobby was playing an important role. Maybe this was subsequently, in terms of cutting off aid to Turkey, which was done fairly soon after the Turkish move into Cyprus.

Congress itself studied this issue later on. There's a report of a Congressional committee somewhere which you could find, if you're interested, which studied the extent to which the Greek Lobby had any influence on the making of American policy. It concluded that the Greek Lobby hadn't had much of an influence. I don't know what it was that motivated Congress to cut off aid to Turkey, but they did.

Q: But this is after you [left Turkey]. Well, then...

BOEHM: Between my first and second tour in Turkey.

Q: Would this be a good point to cut it off?

BOEHM: Yes, it would be...

Q: OK, so we'll pick you up the next time when, after home leave, you went to Bangkok.

BOEHM: Don't tell me that you're finished with Turkey!

Q: What aspects of Turkey should we be talking about?

BOEHM: Maybe nothing. — Q: This is August 9, 1994, and we're going to fill in first a little more detail about Turkey during your first tour there.

BOEHM: This story is not about Turkey. It is on my association with NATO affairs. You might recall that I discussed the MLF, the Multilateral Force. As I recall, I mentioned the names of a few of the key players who were pushing this scheme but I left out one of the very key people. I was reminded of it when I read his obituary a couple of weeks ago in the Washington Post. This was Gerard Smith. This piece [in the Post] describes him as the father of the MLF. Together with an Admiral Lee he formed an office which at first was called the Smith-Lee Team and eventually became the MLF Office. So I didn't want to let Gerard Smith's death pass unnoticed.

Q: What we'll do on your first tour in Turkey from 1971 to 1974 is to leave it to you to fill in anything further when you get the draft of the transcript. So we move on with the interview. You're still doing political-military work and you went to Bangkok, where you served from 1974 to 1976. Could you describe the situation in Bangkok, Thailand, at that time?

BOEHM: Thailand was a kind of support base for US operations in Vietnam. In 1973, you might recall, Congress, in effect, ordered our troops out of Vietnam, and we no longer had ground forces there. However, we were conducting a good deal of air activity out of Thailand. We had three or four significant air bases in Thailand. We had a Navy base. We also had been operating U-2's out of Thailand. That had come to...

Q: The U-2's were reconnaissance planes.

BOEHM: They were relatively slow, high-flying reconnaissance planes. You will recall Francis Gary Powers...

Q: Shot down over Sverdlovsk.

BOEHM: Who was exchanged in Berlin for the Soviet spy, Colonel Abel, during my tour there. We had these problems. But the U-2 operations had come to an end when a group of American reporters had been invited down to the air base at Utapao, Thailand. The U-2's had been carefully tucked around the corner of the buildings so that nobody would see them. However, the reporters did see them, this fact was published, and the Government of Thailand then had to ask us to stop U-2 operations. That happened before I arrived there.

In 1974 we were still conducting significant air and supply operations out of Thailand. Supply operations also covered Cambodia. The Vietnam War was clearly winding down, but until we were out of there, until the war was over, we were going to go on with these operations. My job was the usual political-military effort to coordinate between political and diplomatic requirements, on the one hand, and the US military requirements for

operations, on the other hand. We tried to keep these requirements in balance. This enabled us to continue to operate as smoothly as possible.

At that time Thailand for years had been in the hands of a military government, so that the political-military job meant that we were dealing with the Thai who were actually running the country. So it was a very interesting time. However, it was clear by the time that I got there in 1974 that the Vietnam effort was coming apart, that our objectives there were not going to be achieved, and that the Viet Cong were going to come out on top. At least, it appeared that way. So it was really a holding operation, I would say, at that stage. That was the way it turned out. In 1975, of course, the Viet Cong won, Saigon fell, and Phnom Penh had fallen a few weeks earlier.

From Bangkok we were very much involved in the question of the evacuation of Americans and US Embassies from both Phnom Penh and Saigon. In fact, I had gone over to Phnom Penh with the US Air Force commander in Thailand, General Burns. We flew over to Phnom Penh to have a meeting with the Ambassador, John Dean at the time, to plan the evacuation, which later became known as [Operation] EAGLE PULL. It was a very exciting trip because by that time the Khmer Rouge—we're now talking about Cambodia—had gotten within rocket range of the airport [at Phnom Penh]. Rockets were coming into the airport, so that when you came in there by plane, you had to fly to a point directly over the airport and then describe a very tight spiral right down to the airfield. You couldn't make the usual flight approach because the Khmer Rouge were there. They could have shot you down.

We came down, circled there, and landed. We all jumped out and dove into a bunker. The plane just touched down, we got out, and it took right off again. We had to leave the same day because Congress had ordered that there could be no more than 100 official Americans in Phnom Penh. The Executive Branch chose to interpret that as meaning overnight. You could bring in people during the day. People would leave by evening, so that you would have no more than 100 Americans there overnight. We were among those

who had to come in and go out the same day. We had our meeting. We could hear the rockets on the periphery of Phnom Penh.

In the evening we were going back out to the airport. The decision had been made that we would go to a schoolyard near the Embassy, get into a helicopter, take that to the airport, get into our plane, and get out of there. We left the Embassy in a convoy. We were all wearing bulletproof vests. As we approached the schoolyard, we could see that there was some kind of demonstration or rioting. There was a crowd around the helicopter. The convoy commander decided that it would be inadvisable for us to try to get through and into the helicopter and that we would go on by road to the airport. So we did. As you came into Pochentong airport, the military side was opposite the civilian side. We drove around the inside of the airport perimeter toward the military side, where we were going to board our plane. We drove past a couple of Cambodian military aircraft that were refueling. We got to a bunker which was only a couple of hundred yards farther on, around the perimeter. A couple of rockets came in and hit those planes that were being refueled, and they exploded like a nuclear bomb. We dove into the bunker. Then we reversed what had happened that morning. Our plane came in, touched down, we all rushed to board it, it took right off, and we went back to Bangkok. It was only about a week after that that Phnom Penh actually fell.

Q: When you were talking to Ambassador John Gunther Dean, what was the attitude then? One can't help but compare and contrast what happened in Saigon later on. Ambassador Graham Martin would not, at least publicly, acknowledge to his staff that Saigon was going down the drain.

BOEHM: Of course, John publicly wasn't acknowledging anything, but he was very realistic about this. He knew that Phnom Penh was going to fall very soon. He made realistic plans accordingly, and they worked. It was a very effective and successful evacuation. The evacuees were all brought over to Bangkok. The evacuation was very well run.

Q: Back to Thailand, to the political-military situation. How close were we to the Thai military?

BOEHM: We were quite close to the Thai military. The designated Thai contact for the U. S. was General Kriangsak Chomenan who was my contact and had been the contact of my predecessor, as Political-Military Counselor. We saw a lot of Kriangsak and got to know him quite well. We had lunch and dinner with him at various times. He loved to cook. You would go out to his house, and he would cook these enormous meals. Kriangsak later became Prime Minister. He was a very close contact.

Q: What about the Thai royal family? Did they play any role?

BOEHM: No, at least not as far as we were concerned. Sure, there was a role that they played on the Thai side, but it was a role that was so low key and subtle that it appeared only very rarely, as perceived from outside. Once in a great while, if things were going off the track, the king would intervene, but not very often.

Q: We were talking about our closeness to the Thai military. Was there a problem, as there was in Vietnam, of corruption there?

BOEHM: Oh, yes, of course.

Q: Could you talk about this? How did we deal with it?

BOEHM: Well, we didn't deal with it. We didn't like it. I'm not disclosing any secrets when I say that many of the senior Thai military were, and, presumably, still are quite corrupt. They were denuding the Thai forests of precious timber, including teak and various other kinds of fine wood. They did this illegally. They were enriching themselves in what we would call a corrupt way—which, in many countries, is simply regarded as the normal system. Yes. They were very corrupt, but there was nothing that we could do about that. My own feeling was that it isn't up to us to try to change the morals and mores of

foreign authorities. It is up to their own people to take care of that. We did not actively cooperate with them in their corruption—at least not as far as I am aware. There might have been a few U. S. military who, somehow, were playing the game. However, generally speaking and as far as I can recall, the US authorities did nothing to promote or assist this corruption. On the other hand, we weren't actively involved in trying to suppress it, either.

If corruption became a problem for us in some way, if, for example, US convoys carrying materials from the port down at Sattahip to our bases in the North, were being systematically robbed by land pirates, as they sometimes were, and the generals or others were somehow tolerating or collaborating in this, we would approach the Thai and say, “This has to stop.” We would sometimes stretch the limits of intrusion into the sovereignty of another country by mounting armed escorts for the convoys or covering them with helicopters. You might have some conflict in this respect because, clearly enough, the Thai—both for reasons of sovereignty and for reasons of self-interest—didn't like us to get too active in policing inside their country. But we would do it if it was affecting our operations. However, apart from that, there was nothing we could do about corruption, and we didn't attempt to. After all, we had a stake in remaining on cooperative terms with the Thai military and the Thai government. We were using bases within their country.

After the fall of Saigon, of course, the situation changed dramatically. The Thai, who have made a career for hundreds of years of carefully bending with the wind...

Q: Like bending bamboo.

BOEHM: Bending with the wind and flexible borders. [Laughter] There is a Thai heartland that they used to talk about, which is the area just north and south of Bangkok. The rest of the country has flexible borders. You don't want to get into too much trouble with your neighbors by being too sticky about exactly where the border is. This attitude was coming to the surface once again as the Thai saw the handwriting on the wall. When Phnom Penh and Saigon fell, the Thai felt that they had better make their peace with these neighbors,

against whom they had previously collaborated with us. They started to adjust their relationships.

[In the wake of the end of the Vietnam War] a question came up about our bases in Thailand. Did we want to keep them or not? There was a period there of confusion, or apparent confusion, as to what we wanted to do. It was very difficult to get Washington to say, “We want to keep the bases” or, “We don't want to keep the bases.” It was hard for the Embassy—or for me, anyway—to operate under those conditions and to know what to try to do. The Thai finally asked us to remove the bases from Thailand. We agreed. We retained a few facilities to use, but basically the whole structure of the U. S. military presence in Thailand was closed down.

Q: How did we feel about the threat from Vietnam and Laos to Thailand itself?

BOEHM: Obviously, we were very much concerned because the prevailing idea at the time was still the so-called Domino Theory, according to which Thailand would be next in line since Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam had been taken by the various communist movements. A serious communist insurrection had been going on for years in northeastern Thailand, in addition to a different insurrection in southern Thailand. But it was the northeastern insurrection that was of concern to us. We felt that Thailand would be under heavy pressure and was endangered. The Thai were trying to put the best face on the situation and were projecting an air of confidence that, if they could do things their way, they could probably get through all right. Of course, they continued to be members of SEATO [Southeast Asia Treaty Organization].

Q: Did we tell them that, “We are always with you” and make soothing sounds like that?

BOEHM: Yes. A strong effort was made on the US side to indicate our continuing intention to resist the spread of communism from Indochina to neighboring countries. In fact, it didn't spread.

Q: Did you have the feeling that the fact that we had opened a kind of relationship with Communist China a little before you arrived in Bangkok take off some of the pressure?

BOEHM: I'm trying now to recall the sequence. I don't recall that kind of connection arising from our establishment of relations with China. Of course, we came to see, not long after that—maybe the seeds of it were already visible there—that China and Vietnam were not friends. They ended up fighting each other. [Laughter]

Q: The relationship of lips and teeth which the Chinese had previously spoken of was not exactly applicable. It just didn't turn out that way.

BOEHM: They ended in a war of their own along the border between China and northern Vietnam. I just don't recall that the element of China was all that significant in our view of Thailand.

Q: Well, Laos didn't present much of a threat to Thailand, did it?

BOEHM: It did, if you think of the map. An awful lot of Laos abuts Thailand, along the Mekong River. There was a lot going on back and forth across the border. Laos was a supply base for the communist insurgency in northern Thailand. Laos was not a major problem, but at that point we were looking at Indochina as a whole—and probably looking wrongly, in that respect, as if it were one territory. We seemed to be saying that there was this threat, coming out of what used to be called Indochina, which consists of Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

As it turned out, none of that materialized. It all kind of simmered down, and we know where we are now.

Q: What about the CIA? Indochina was certainly their great field of operations in those days. Did you have any feel about what they were doing in Thailand?

BOEHM: I was not much involved with them. Of course, as a senior Embassy officer, I knew of some of the things that they were doing, and I was a consumer of some of their product which, quite frankly, I found unhelpful or irrelevant. There was nothing there that any intelligent observer on the spot couldn't figure out for himself. I found it to be the case in a number of other countries, too. In terms of the intelligence produced for the consumer, their output didn't tell you anything that you didn't already know or could not figure out for yourself.

Q: We had two ambassadors when you were there. One was William Kintner, and the other was Charles Whitehouse. Could you talk about how they operated and what they did?

BOEHM: As I said when we started this interview, I wasn't going to talk about personalities. However, I could say a few things about how they operated.

Kintner was a retired military officer who had gone into academia. He had been involved in the Foreign Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania and then was politically appointed as an Ambassador by the Nixon administration. He liked to have a lot of discussion. He liked to have meetings. He liked to examine broad questions. He would take the key figures in the Embassy down to a beach house, where there would be a two-day workshop or seminar at which such questions would be discussed as what US interests really are in Vietnam. He liked to have these discussions. I personally found him quite stimulating.

Q: That's the type of thing that we seldom have in the Foreign Service. We get so operational that we don't really think what we're being operational about.

BOEHM: Ambassador Kintner liked to talk about policy matters of fundamental importance, and I think that that was good. Although himself a retired military officer, or perhaps because he was a retired military man, his relations with the military were a little

dicey at times. Perhaps he knew more about them than they liked. They didn't get along too well with him. Eventually, Kintner was withdrawn by Washington. He didn't come to the end of his normal tour. He was sacked, in effect.

I liked Kintner. I thought basically well of him. Maybe I was biased, because I'd gone there as the heir presumptive of the DCM. This was the basis on which Kintner had hired me, although I hadn't known him before. Ambassador Macomber had recommended me when he met Ambassador Kintner in Washington. Kintner expected that his then DCM would be leaving.

Q: Who was that?

BOEHM: Ed Masters. Kintner was looking for a new Political-Military Counselor who could become DCM when Masters left. Macomber recommended me, and Kintner hired me, so that I went there with the expectation of becoming DCM.

After I'd been there for about 8-10 months, Kintner left. Charley Whitehouse came from Laos. He had been Ambassador in Vientiane and moved on to Bangkok. So he was already familiar with the area. When Charley arrived, I called on him as soon as I could and said, “You might be aware of the circumstances under which I came here.” Ed Masters was still on hand. I said, “I want you [Ambassador Whitehouse] to know that I don't regard any commitment made by Ambassador Kintner as in any way binding on you.” Charley said, “That's fine.” [Laughter] It was left there. Apparently, that was that. He didn't say, “I'm not going to make you DCM.” However, on the other hand it seemed probable to me that he wasn't going to. He probably had his own nominee in mind. So I said that I would like to leave, then, because I had come to Bangkok at least partly because there was the prospect that I would become DCM. Charley said, “OK, but I'd like you to stay until all this settles down.” At that point Saigon was falling, and things were changing. So of course I agreed to stay on. It took a little over a year before I could leave. Ed Masters and I left on the same day. [Laughter]

Charley Whitehouse's style as Ambassador was different from Kintner's. It was a very informal, laid-back kind of style. Charley was kind of enchanted with the military. He wanted them to think of him as a former Marine pilot, which he had been during World War II.

That was not my approach. In several assignments in political-military work, I was primarily concerned with establishing and operating on the basis of civilian primacy over the military and the notion that the military had a restricted job to do. When it came to policy or the relations with foreign governments, that was the State Department's or the Embassy's job. So that ultimately brought me into some degree of friction with our military. I found, when I arrived in Bangkok that that was not the way in which matters had been handled. Our military had been given a freer rein than I thought that they ought to have. So in trying to sort that out and get them into what I regarded as the appropriate posture, it inevitably created friction. Our military tended to think that I was against them. I wasn't against them at all. It seemed to me that only people experienced in dealing with foreign governments should have the responsibility for getting what our military needed. Our military tended to act as if they were in the United States. They often seemed to attract strong counter-reactions from foreign governments because they wanted too much, went too far, or didn't handle matters properly.

So I felt that my approach, which was to compel them to have all of their dealings with foreign governments through me or the Embassy, would eventually get them more of what they needed than if they did it their way. I think that was true. But, as I said, inevitably this produced some friction. That settled down. Generally, they could see that I could deliver for them what they needed. Then they would accept my role, as I saw it.

Q: Let me ask a little about family life in Bangkok, because Bangkok was a special place. In the first place there was a large U. S. military presence. I have never served there and only visited there once—very briefly, a couple of years later. It was renowned then, and now, much to its detriment, as the sex capital of the world, as well as a center for drugs.

This must have created tremendous problems for families and for the Embassy itself. Could you tell us a little about that?

BOEHM: Yes, it raised very serious problems for the American families living there. I was living there as a bachelor, so I didn't have the kinds of problems that people with, say, teenage kids had. I didn't have them in my own life, but as a senior Embassy official, I had some responsibility for considering and trying to do something about these problems, although others in the Embassy, especially the Administrative Counselor and the DCM, had far more responsibility than I did.

I suppose that Bangkok had a much older tradition in this respect. My own awareness is that it was the Vietnam War that really gave Bangkok its big impetus as the sex capital of the world. It was an R&R [Rest and Recreation] center for our troops coming out of Vietnam. Tours were organized for our soldiers. Thai operators—I'm sure with connections with the Thai military—made a fortune out of these things. The typical R&R tour for GI's coming out of Vietnam would be to bring them to Thailand. Then the whole thing would be packaged for them, including the girls. They'd be taken to certain shops to buy jewelry and gems. Yes, it was a big business. As I said, it brought a lot of money into Thailand. Around the more remote bases up country, tiny villages developed into towns whose entire living was made off sex and related services.

For the American families at the Embassy—those living in Bangkok, as opposed to those coming over for R&R—the problem was more a matter of drugs, rather than sex. Bangkok, I believe, was the first Embassy that established a serious drug education program in an effort to protect American teen-age kids against involvement with drugs. It was a problem and remained so. Some headway had been made, but it was still a problem. There was a strong effort being made by the Embassy to educate the kids and cope with this problem—with recreational facilities, educational programs, and shipping people out, if necessary. All of those things were being done, but I was not directly involved in them. I was interested in them, obviously.

Q: When you left Bangkok, what was the prevailing mood? Here you were, in the major country in Southeast Asia. We're talking about 1976. The question of where Southeast Asia would go must have been a major concern for the Embassy.

BOEHM: It was. The main question under discussion was how long it would be before Thailand fell to the communists. Estimates varied, but many of us thought that it probably would.

Q: You really thought that Thailand was a falling domino.

BOEHM: You felt that the domino was going to fall unless the Thai cleaned up their act and got serious about corruption and other injustices that were going on. It seemed doubtful to a lot of people that they would be able to do that, that they would, in fact, as we saw it, be able to straighten themselves out. As I said, there might be others who wouldn't agree that they needed to be straightened out because they were acting in their traditional way and that this was acceptable in that culture. But I'm not so sure about that. So I think that there was a general expectation that Thailand was at serious risk of going the way of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. That was the general mood as I perceived it, a mood which I shared. I thought that Thailand's prospects were quite bleak at the time.

Q: Were you passing any of this feeling on to the Thai military in one way or another?

BOEHM: No. Well, I don't know how they perceived the situation. Discussions with them were designed to bring out how they saw it, but we had no official position of telling them that we thought that they were going to go down the tubes. On the contrary, we encouraged them not to go down the tubes. [Laughter] So we tried to draw them out on how they would deal with this threat, as you might say. As I said, you got varying reactions. Some of them would shrug and talk about flexible borders. Thailand's borders had been expanding and contracting for centuries. They might take that approach again. If the Laotians or Cambodians wanted this or that, they speculated as to whether they

should make a big deal out of it. The idea was that they would survive by a flexible approach.

Well, as the situation turned out, as many people thought that it would, surprising things happened in Cambodia. You had the Khmer Rouge takeover. Then you had the Vietnamese push the Khmer Rouge [out of Phnom Penh]. We all know what the subsequent events were. There were such distractions that, certainly, Cambodia was in no position to attack anybody. Laos, by itself, was insignificant, except as a land mass. Vietnam addressed its internal problems and the China problem. They all got distracted, attention went elsewhere, and nothing happened. [Laughter] Thailand, in the meantime, is booming, although no one can say how long the boom will last.

Q: Then you moved out of this hothouse to a completely different world.

BOEHM: The cool house, right, in central New York, the so-called snow belt.

Q: You went to Hamilton College.

BOEHM: That's right. I went to Hamilton College.

Q: You were there from 1976 to 1977. How did you get that assignment as a diplomat in residence?

BOEHM: I didn't want that assignment. Before I went to Bangkok, I had met with the Director General of the Foreign Service. He said, “Well, you know that you're going there with the expectation that you're going to be DCM. However, you understand that there can be no guarantees of that. It is all provisional. Ambassador Kintner has to decide whether he wants you, etc.” I said, “Yes, I do know that. However, I would expect that if, for some reason, it doesn't pan out, I would then be given a comparable assignment elsewhere.” The Director General agreed to this. Well, it didn't pan out, and after my conversation with Charley Whitehouse I sent a letter back to the Department and reminded them of

this conversation with the Director General. I asked them to start looking around for an assignment for me. The reply was quite bleak.

Q: Well, for one thing, this was part of the Vietnam collapse, wasn't it?

BOEHM: Not really, no. I wouldn't say that. It was unrelated to that. I'd gone to Bangkok, not with the promise, but with the expectation of becoming DCM. We got a new ambassador, and he had other ideas. Fair enough. But I had discussed that possibility, as I said. I reminded the Department of my conversation with the Director General and asked them to come up with something comparable to this DCM slot. To my great surprise, they acknowledged that I had had this conversation with the Director General. They confirmed to me that their records showed that there had indeed been this assurance. Unfortunately, they added, there is nothing available. [Laughter] They said that they couldn't invent something, because there was no comparable assignment available.

I don't know what you can do in those conditions except to ask, “OK, what have you got?” They came up with this diplomat in residence thing, and that was all there was. I found it OK. I knew that Hamilton College was a good, Little Ivy League school in central New York and set in a pleasant area. I thought that maybe a year of academe would be fine. There were very few alternatives.

Q: At that time what did a diplomat in residence do? The Vietnam War was over, as far as America was concerned at the time. Did you get any backlash from that? What was the student body and what were you doing there?

BOEHM: Well, you are given the rank of Professor, a senior academic rank. Then you do whatever you and the chairman of the department you are attached to, and others at the school, work out. I don't think that the program is well planned—or it wasn't at that time. There should have been far more things agreed to before the Foreign Service Officer showed up. There weren't. It was all very loose and open. Maybe that's the only way it can

be, but in any case that's the way it was. You get to the college involved and you begin to work out what you're going to do.

I wanted to do some teaching and some recruiting. I wanted to get some students to interest themselves in joining the Foreign Service. Then, because Hamilton College is a very small school, I also wanted to extend my net to the rather numerous colleges and universities in the same area. There were a couple of them right there in Utica, NY. Hamilton is just outside of Utica. There are Syracuse University, Colgate University, and a number of other places where you could go. So I lectured at these other universities. Then I taught a course with the head of the government department. I did a winter break seminar type class, which worked well enough, and a sort of war game exercise. I did various things of that kind.

Q: How did you find the students? Was the tumult of the 1960's over by then?

BOEHM: Well, Hamilton had never been among the more radical campuses. The 1960's were not completely over. They'd given Bill Colby, Director of the CIA, an adverse reception at one time. There had been some mild demonstrations with a few signs being carried. But there was no rough stuff. It was all very civilized.

Hamilton had been a single sex, men's college. You recall that about that time in the 1970's Congress and the White House decided that single sex schools were somehow discriminatory against women. Single sex schools would cease to be eligible for any kind of federal assistance. This created a desperate situation for almost every single-sex college and university in the United States, all of which, it turned out, were getting a lot of federal help, in one form or another—research grants and so forth. So Hamilton's solution was not to go coed but to establish a women's college right across the street, called Kirkland College, at enormous expense. And it was called—I forget the term of art that was used—a coordinated college. People from either college could take courses at

either school. There was a close relationship, but they were still separate schools—one male, one female. This satisfied federal requirements.

That was the situation when I arrived. During the year that I was there the enormous expense of that arrangement came home to roost. They finally decided to do what they should have done to begin with: merge the two schools. So Hamilton is now coed. But, as I said, it was not the place for violent demonstrations.

Q: Let's stop at this point. We'll resume this interview when you went into the Inspection Corps.

—Q: Today is August 29, 1994. Dick, we will start where we get you out of Hamilton College. Then you had about a year's service in the Inspection Corps?

BOEHM: Yes. When I left Hamilton College, I still had no assignment, actually. Since the State Department does not like to have people on the payroll who are not gainfully employed, they decided that they would just put me somewhere, until an assignment came up. There was something which used to be called the Inspector General of Assistance, which was different from the State Department Inspector General. The job of the Inspector General of Assistance was basically to inspect AID [Agency for International Development] programs. Congress had just abolished that position. It had been created by Congress and it was abolished by Congress. Someone in the State Department Inspector General's office got the idea that the State Department Inspector General could move in on this and pick up this function which was now not being performed by anybody. AID/Washington was strongly opposed to this notion, but the State Department pressed on. They wanted to do a pilot project to see: a) if it could be done, and b) what resources might be needed to do it.

So they decided to hook a pilot project on to what was then a regularly scheduled State Department inspection of Embassy Manila. They asked me to take this on. I had nothing else to do and agreed to do it. I got a young economic officer to go with me. We were to

inspect not only the AID operation in the Philippines, which was a big one, but OPIC, the Peace Corps, military assistance, and all of the odds and ends.

Q: OPIC was what?

BOEHM: The Overseas Private Investment Corporation. I was also to inspect various odds and ends that might be considered to fall under the rubric of foreign assistance, including military assistance. So we were going to handle this pilot project. Before I went out to Manila, I called on the Assistant Director of AID for the region. He told me that he was strongly opposed to this and that I couldn't expect very much support from AID. He didn't want the State Department to be inspecting them. I'm sure that he didn't want anybody to be inspecting them. I said, “OK, I'm going to do it anyway, since this is my job.” So off we went to the Philippines.

It was an enormous team. We had 10 people on this inspection team. The inspection lasted for six weeks. It must have been a hell of a burden on Embassy Manila. We had one thing going for us: that is, the Ambassador to the Philippines had just departed. The new Ambassador had not yet arrived, so we were inspecting at a time when there was no Ambassador who had a vested interest in what we would find. The charg# d'affaires was very helpful.

Q: Who was he?

BOEHM: He was Lee Stull. So we did this inspection. We prepared our separate, pilot project report on it. While we were there, doing the inspection, AID in Washington was busily scurrying around on Capitol Hill, trying to prevent the State Department Inspector General from picking up the function of inspecting AID. They succeeded. They got to the appropriate Congressmen and Senators, who called in the State Department Inspector General and said, in effect, if Congress had wanted the State Department to inspect AID, Congress would have said so. Congress didn't say so, and, therefore, get out of the business. So when I returned with my well-designed report, which found that the

State Department, indeed, could handle this function but would need certain, additional resources, I was told that my report was going to be locked in the most secure safe in Washington and would never see the light of day.

And it didn't. I should add that the new Ambassador arrived while we were still in Manila. We got a chance to brief him orally.

Q: Who was he?

BOEHM: Can I be wrong in thinking that it was Dave Newsom?

Q: Dave Newsom was there.

BOEHM: Oh, it was Dave Newsom, then. Anyway, the report was buried, but I kept a copy of it. Some time later, when Dick Murphy was getting ready to go to the Philippines as Ambassador, I found that he was aware of this report. I loaned him a copy, so it was read where it needed to be read, but it was never circulated.

Q: Since you were in the middle of this thing, what was the rationale? I can't think of any place that basically needed an outside inspection more than AID, because they spend a great deal of money on programs which may or may not be of value. I mean, the normal State Department process is the same anywhere in the world—its relationships and all of that.

But when you get to AID, you're talking about programs that really need to be looked at, re-looked at, and then looked at again 10 years later. This is the situation.

BOEHM: You're absolutely right. My report was not terribly flattering to the AID Mission in Manila, which, by the way, was extremely uncooperative, presumably on instructions from AID/Washington. It was a badly run mission. So AID had every reason, I think, for not wanting outsiders to inspect it. I must tell you in all honesty that I do not have a good opinion of that agency or its programs. I think that it doesn't do what it should do. In some

countries that I've seen—like Nepal, for example—it does more harm than good. So there are plenty of reasons why they don't want people looking under the rug.

A couple of interesting things happened in Manila. I was interested in going to the Philippines in particular because, although we never called it this, you might say that the Philippines was our only colony. I wanted to have a look at it. I was fascinated to see what the place where the United States had governed for 50 years looked like and what legacy we had left behind us. The Filipinos themselves described their history as “300 years in a convent and then 50 years in Hollywood.” [Laughter] The reference is to successive Spanish and then US occupations, if I can call them that. I think that there was something to that.

The Philippines was a curious place. The Consular Section at the Embassy in Manila was especially curious. The hotel where the inspectors stayed was right across the street from the Consular Section. When you got up early in the morning, like 6:00 A. M., and looked out the window, the line of waiting applicants for consular services was already stretching out of sight. The Filipinos all feel, although it's a classical love-hate thing, that basically they're sort of American citizens and have a right to go to the United States whenever they wish to.

The Visa Unit had a very difficult time. They had to refuse a lot of visas. Visa fraud was very high in the Philippines. I saw that during my very first posting. When Filipinos in Okinawa would come in to apply for visas, [they presented documents] on which they had taken a very hard eraser and scrubbed out dates, places of birth, and all of that. The Filipinos would become enraged if they were denied a visa, because they really felt that they were entitled to it. So there is a legacy there.

I had the opportunity to spend a three-day, holiday weekend there and I was able to go out on a scuba diving excursion. We spent one night on an island, a small island, with a village and a schoolyard. Our boat put in there. We asked the head man of the village if we could

sleep in the schoolyard overnight. He said OK. So we did. There was only one well in the village. So if you wanted water, you had to walk through the one street through the village to the well at the other end of the village. Everybody needed to get water, and we did that. We found that, as you went, people would be hanging out their windows to look at you. The older ones could chat you up in English. The younger ones could not speak English.

At that time President Ferdinand Marcos was going through his nationalistic period and had made Tagalog the official language. Making Tagalog the official language deprived English of its status of equality. I expressed concern to Filipinos in Manila, whom I met at receptions, that the Philippines was going to lose a very valuable economic asset if its people began to lose the ability to speak English. In today's world this is of great economic value. The people I said this to were members of the elite whom you might meet at a reception. They said, “Oh, that's no problem. We all speak English—everybody speaks English.” But I certainly found in that village that the older people spoke English, but the younger people did not.

At the end of the inspection we were assisted with some of the unclassified typing by some Filipina secretaries. The inspection team decided to take them out to dinner. We went to the Cultural Center of the Philippines, a very splendid building [on Manila Bay] which had an opera house, symphony hall, and a restaurant. The service in the restaurant was unbelievably slow. We kept inquiring what the problem was. We were finally told that Mrs. Marcos, the famous Imelda Marcos who was the wife of President Marcos, was attending a concert that evening in the building and was coming to the restaurant afterwards. That slowed down the service for some reason. You would have thought that it would have speeded it up. It didn't. It slowed down the service. Eventually, Mrs. Marcos arrived, with her large train of toadies, supporters, and friends. As she went past our table, she stopped. She had spotted this group of foreigners and Filipinos and chatted a bit. She was very charming, I must say, to our Filipina secretaries. It was the thrill of a lifetime for them.

They couldn't believe that they'd actually talked with Imelda. The Philippines is a funny place.

Q: After your look at the AID operation could you tell us a little more about the sort of problems that you saw there?

BOEHM: I'll talk more about that, if I may, when we get to Nepal. I had a much closer, longer view of AID in Nepal.

Q: All right. Did your assignment to Nepal follow [your inspection in the Philippines] or did you do something else?

BOEHM: It did follow [the visit to the Philippines]. I did another inspection after Manila. Inspections take quite a long time because you have the preliminary period in Washington, getting ready to do it—talking to the desk people and others in Washington on the concerns of the people you're going to inspect. Then you go to the post. As I said, in the case of Manila, the field inspection took six weeks. Then you come back and polish up the reports. The whole process can take three or four months for a single inspection. The inspection of Manila was followed by another one of Spain and Portugal, after which I inspected senior Foreign Service officers on secondment to other agencies, universities and the like. Then, at the end of those inspections, I was still unassigned and still looking for an assignment. The personnel people hinted to me that an awful lot of people were retiring. [Laughter] They meant that it was a perfectly decent thing to do. So I wasn't sure what I was going to do. They offered me a few jobs I didn't want. I wanted to go overseas. Finally, as a sort of take-it-or-leave it offer, they came up with the position of DCM in Kathmandu.

Q: Nepal.

BOEHM: Nepal. I had taken a two-week vacation there when I was assigned to Bangkok and found the place quite fascinating. But the job at that time was a couple of grades

below my personal grade. However, I thought, “Oh, I'll take it.” So I took it. It was supposed to be a three-year posting. I went there. I wasn't disappointed.

Q: You were there from 1978 to 1980?

BOEHM: Right. Two years, as it turned out. Although we really had no very important business, I wasn't disappointed with the assignment. Let me take out the word “very.” We had no important business in Nepal at all. Development assistance was probably the thing that we handled more than anything else.

And then we observed the politics of the place. China and India were the two powers with an interest in Nepal. Of course, it lies right between them. The Chinese were very active, and so the Indians were also very active. India held all the cards. India was bound eventually, as it was already, to be the dominant, outside power. The Chinese were giving it a shot. At that time China and India were not on good terms, so it was interesting to observe and report on that. However, we didn't have any serious, political business.

Q: Could you give us some idea of what the political situation was? What was Nepal like at that time?

BOEHM: At that time Nepal had an absolute monarchy, with a king of the ruling Shah dynasty which had been in power in Nepal for 200 years. Let me correct that. A king had been on the throne for 200 years. For roughly the last 100 of those years—and maybe a little bit longer—the succeeding kings had been figureheads, while the Rana family provided hereditary prime ministers, Maharajahs who actually ruled the place. However, after the end of World War II, when India gained its independence, the then figurehead King Thibhuvan of the Shah dynasty made a move, with India's support, to throw out the Rana's. He resumed power, which his family hadn't held for 120 years. The king during my time in Nepal was the grandson of King Thibhuvan, whose son, King Mahendra, had toyed with democracy. He had allowed elections to be held, and there had been a Parliament under the well known Prime Minister, B. P. Koirala. King Mahendra hadn't liked the way

things were going. He found out that he didn't enjoy sharing power. So he had all the leaders arrested and abolished the Parliament. It was still an absolute monarchy under his son, King Birendra.

It was kind of a humane dictatorship. Along with B. P. Koirala, you had a couple of other political leaders. One of the senior leaders was a man named Ganesh Man Singh. Ganesh Man was in jail. He was a political prisoner, as B. P. Koirala also had been. Every respectable Nepali had probably been in jail at one time or another. Ganesh Man fell ill, so the Palace let him out of jail and paid for him to be taken to the United States for medical treatment. When he came back to Nepal, he was put back in jail. [Laughter] It was that kind of a humane dictatorship, not a tyranny in the traditional sense. It was a semi-benevolent despotism.

Your question was, what was the political situation? There was some turmoil. Toward the end of my stay there the students rose in rebellion and marched around the streets for a while and hung shoes around people's necks, which is their way of humiliating people, including some of their own leaders. The Palace handled that by seeming to make concessions, agreeing to a referendum, and then rigging it. They succeeded in achieving the outcome that they wanted. They had something called the Partyless Panchayat system. This started with groups of five villages, which is what Panchayat means. These groups elected a representative to the next higher level who, in turn, would join in electing representatives to Parliament. The Parliament had almost no power. That was the system at the time.

The king promised to institute a more open system. What he promised was not an election but a referendum on whether or not the people wanted the Partyless Panchayat system or an ordinary Parliamentary system of political parties. It was a fairly close election, but the Partyless Panchayat system, which was the one preferred by the king, won the referendum. However, holding the referendum served to defuse the tension in the political system. The students went back to the university, and things went on as before until,

as I'm sure you know, there was another, big disturbance a couple of years ago, and a genuine democracy was installed, which is now in place.

Q: Did we have any interest at that time in doing anything?

BOEHM: Well, we always promoted democracy. So, of course, we welcomed the referendum and we urged everyone to make sure that it was honestly conducted.

Q: Your Ambassador at the time was Doug Heck?

BOEHM: Ambassador Doug Heck was there when I arrived. I hadn't really known Doug. I think that I had met him once, when he was on his way from Tehran, where he'd been DCM, to Washington. From there he was sent to Niger as Ambassador. I met him, I think, for about 10 seconds at somebody's party in Washington, so I hardly knew him. Apparently, I was one of the few people offered to him as DCM in Kathmandu. I agreed to go, if selected. He picked me on the basis of my paper record. He called up a few people who knew me, but at that time he wasn't a friend of mine. He later became a very close friend. He was a wonderful guy. Doug Heck had actually opened Embassy Kathmandu. He had been assigned to the Political Section in New Delhi as First Secretary. When we decided to set up an Embassy in Kathmandu, he was sent to open it up—find a building and get things started. He did so. The first Ambassador, I think, was Henry Stebbins, an old timer in the Foreign Service.

Q: This was way back in...When did we open the Embassy?

BOEHM: This would have been, I think, in the early to mid 1950's. I don't recall the exact year. Doug had always wanted to come back to Nepal as Ambassador, and he succeeded in doing so. His wife, by the way, is in the Foreign Service—Ernie Heck.

Q: I knew her in Vietnam, where she was a political officer.

BOEHM: Well, she was mostly a South Asia hand. Most of her career has been in India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, as Doug's had also been. I saw Ernie recently when she was Consul General in Madras [India].

The last few years of Doug's life were tragic. He and Ernie visited me in Cyprus when I was there as Ambassador. By that time Doug had retired. Ernie was the FSO, and Doug was the dependent spouse. This was a famous case. There was an article on them in the Department of State Newsletter, calling him a househusband. Doug took that very well. When they visited Cyprus, he was ill. It wasn't certain at that point how ill he really was, but he was concerned about it. He would ask me, “Do you detect any difference in my speech—slowing down, for example?” And I said, “No,” although I did detect a slight difference. But he had some kind of degenerative disease—Parkinson's or I don't know what it was. By the time Ernie was in Colombo as chief of the Political Section, Doug was no longer with it. He was confined to bed and didn't connect with the outside world. It was all very sad. Ernie was able to handle this because she could get very good domestic help in Colombo. When she was assigned to Madras, she simply moved the whole installation there, so that Doug was very well taken care of.

I did a tour of south India much later—a couple of years ago. I had never been in south India before. I spent a few days in Madras as Ernie's house guest. Doug was still alive then but died not long after that. The last time I saw Ernie was when she brought Doug's remains back to Washington. It was a very sad way for Doug to go.

Q: How did the Ambassador and you as DCM operate with the Nepalese government? Was it much of a government?

BOEHM: There was a full panoply of ministries and officials. Then you had the whole palace structure, with advisers at the palace, who were kind of a kitchen or shadow cabinet. It was very difficult to penetrate the inner workings of the palace. You had to get to know a few key people and try to see if you could establish a dialogue with them to

find out what was going on. As I say, it was a very closed kind of political system with various people in the power structure that worked in a very secretive way. The Queen, for example, was thought to be very influential, but one didn't meet her.

We tried to establish contact with what one might call the Opposition. This included people like B. P. Koirala, who was still alive. He was quite ill then and stayed in his house, but I was able to call on him a couple of times. He was a very inspirational figure—one of those people in whose presence you feel that you're seeing a saint. He was a very spiritual kind of character. So you could meet him and those who, during the brief period of democracy, had been the leaders of the government. Various people knew part of what was going on. You could meet them and have lunch with them and try to piece together a picture of what was happening and what was going to happen.

I have a feeling that the situation was much less complex than we thought it was. [Laughter]

Q: That often is the case. What you thought you saw...

BOEHM: But you're always looking for arcane explanations of what's happening. We knew the cabinet ministers and had contact with them, especially the Interior Minister because we'd have Americans in jail and we'd try to see what could be done for them. This was in the course of performing the protection function of an Embassy.

Q: This was during the Carter administration, so human rights...

BOEHM: Human rights were a big issue. Pat Derian was Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Affairs. I must say that I didn't think that she was at all effective. Her approach was a poor one. She rubbed people the wrong way. During her one visit to Nepal that I was able to observe, she broke a lot of china without accomplishing anything, except that she made the Embassy's ability to function more difficult. We made what noises we could on the subject of human rights and hoped to have some impact. We used

our contacts, not just to find out what was going on but to try to implant ideas about what we thought to be good.

We had the aid program, which I was going to talk about. This program probably gave us the only leverage we had. The United States didn't want to play a very prominent role in Nepal. We left that to the Indians and the Chinese and, to a lesser extent, to the British, who had been semi-colonial overlords. They actually at one point had invaded Nepal and were very influential when they held power in India. India continued that tradition of being the dominant outside power in Nepal, but we had the aid program. All of the aid people around the world wanted to be in Nepal, because Nepal was desperately poor. It was one of the two or three poorest countries in the world, with a per capita GNP [Gross National Product], when I was there, of about $100. Many Nepalese were not part of the money economy at all. If you went up in the hills, you would find a kind of subsistence agriculture. The people picked up a little money by carrying a load of salt from Tibet down to India, bringing back containers of kerosene on their backs.

It was a very hard economy. People were experiencing hardship, but the Nepalese, it seemed to me, were able to endure hardship much better than most people. They were very cheerful. They were sustained by a very, very strong culture, particularly in the hills. Although Nepal is officially Hindu and is known as the world's only Hindu kingdom, in fact a large proportion of the population were Buddhists, especially among the hill tribes, who were Tibetan or Mongolian, ethnically speaking.

Everywhere there was need, in terms of the standard of living of the people, which was very low. Nobody had clean water. Everybody had too many children—that whole situation was going on. There was a lot to do. Every donor country in the world, whether bilaterally or through international organizations, wanted to be in Nepal, aiding the country. It was receiving too much, ineffective assistance. A road would be built. There was one called The Western Hills Road, which we built with AID money. It was badly designed. Its only

result was that the mountains began to flow down into the valleys every time it rained. It was a mess.

I found that our AID projects were very sweeping in their intent and scope but very ineffective in practice. I argued for much smaller projects at the village level, such as buying villages the necessary piping and letting them build the water lines to supply the village. But AID resisted that.

Q: Why?

BOEHM: Because it would have cut out a lot of AID consultants. AID operates on the basis, not only of permanent staff, but also of consultants. Most of their projects are carried out by consultants or private firms that they hire to do this or that project. This is one of the things that bothered me most about AID. They spent an awful lot of their money on travel, sending people to the United States for consultation and bringing people out to do a study. They kept doing feasibility studies. The project would not be carried out, and two years later they would do another feasibility study. When you broke down how their assistance was being used, you found out that a very large proportion of it was going for travel and feasibility studies. Nothing was really happening. Maybe that's a good thing. When they did something, it often turned out to be sociologically bad. So I found very little to admire and much to criticize in their operations in Nepal. And I saw this elsewhere, as well.

Then, of course, most of the consultancies were held by former AID employees. Somebody would retire from AID and set up a business, the purpose of which was to receive contracts from AID. I thought that the whole thing was a scandal.

When you looked at Nepal, a desperately poor country that really needed help and then you saw this money being frittered away on travel, consultants, and what have you, you could get emotional about it. I used to get emotional about it. I still do.

Q: How were your received by AID and by Washington?

BOEHM: Well, the State Department in Washington shrugged it off. State was used to this, and I think that they felt that they probably couldn't do much about it. I felt that State tended to distance itself from AID operations. AID/Washington and the local AID mission didn't want to hear this. The local AID mission had to hear it, because they were there, and I was the DCM. This was my first really direct involvement in AID matters, where I felt that maybe I could really do something and try to elbow AID into a more fruitful posture. So the local AID mission sort of had to play along with me, but they never really responded. They'd throw me a crumb once in a while to make me feel that I was having some impact and that they were listening to me, but they really weren't. All they wanted to do was to fend me off. I think that it was a disastrously poor operation and a terrible waste of the taxpayers' money.

Q: What about corruption—institutional corruption? I mean, what we may have been doing was, as you said, paying for too much travel, paying for housing and all that. But also there's the more predictable corruption. Did you find that there was a problem there with the local people, or how did it strike you?

BOEHM: I'm not aware of that. I didn't see any sign of personnel in or connected with AID ripping off the system or profiting from corruption, except to the extent, as I said, that the “old boy” system of hiring a former AID employee for a consultant's job might be considered corruption. I can't say that there was much corruption [among the Americans].

Q: You mentioned other countries—the French, the British, the Swedes, the Germans.

BOEHM: The Swiss were in there, too. They had very good projects. First of all, Switzerland doesn't have an aid organization—or didn't have then. If they wanted to do a project in a country, they would hire people temporarily. They didn't pay them very much. These people were motivated. The Swiss would send them out. They were on the site. They weren't in Kathmandu. They were out where the project was, making sure that it got properly done. They would choose appropriate projects that suited the locality, doing

something with the mountains and the rivers, which, of course, the Swiss know something about. They'd finish it and then would go away—would return to their normal lives. There was no career aid service [in Switzerland]. As I was saying, everybody—the Swedes, the Germans, and the Swiss and many other countries—were there.

The British, of course, had a special position there, not only because of their former position in India but because of the Gurkha soldiers. I suppose that you might call this a fascinating footnote in British history—far more than a footnote in Nepalese history. The Gurkhas are from the hill tribes in Nepal. They're all recruited from a couple of traditionally warlike tribes—the Gurung and a few others. The British had a number of regiments of Gurkhas in the British Army, which were assigned all over the world. In the Khyber Pass, for example, in Pakistan, as you drive up to the pass, you find that there's one section of the road, flanked by rock walls, where the various British regiments and Army units that have served and fought there had their coats of arms and their names carved on the walls. One of them is a Gurkha Regiment. They've been all over the place. When Britain was at the height of its colonial power, these Gurkhas would serve all over the world. Britain was phasing them out. They were down to probably one battalion at their headquarters in Hong Kong.

The British felt an obligation to do something for the Gurkhas who had completed their service, which normally was for 18 years. The Gurkhas would then return to Nepal and go back to their villages. The British figured—and this also has to do with their aid program—that they had taken these men from very primitive villages, trained them, taught them to read and write, taught them mechanical skills, taught them to think, and taught them a little mathematics. Couldn't that be used in the service of development? So they started something called The British Gurkha Ex-Servicemen's Reintegration Scheme. A typical British title. What they did was to take a retired Gurkha from his village and give him something that had to do with development. One example would be animal husbandry involving raising goats. They would teach him to breed goats and improve the strain, then

give him some goats, and put him back in his home village. They were doing that very successfully and very effectively.

The Indians have quite a few Gurkhas in the Indian Army. Nepal itself has maintained some Gurkha troops, which they use in peacekeeping activities. They have them in South Lebanon and here and there in the world. There was a curious circumstance when Brunei was about to gain its independence. The British had always had Gurkhas in Brunei. The Sultan of Brunei said, “No independence unless you agree to leave the Gurkhas here in Brunei.” The British didn't want to do it but finally agreed. There are Gurkhas in Brunei to this day. He knew what he was doing. They are fine troops and very impressive.

Q: They are renowned. They are probably right at the top of any group of fighting troops. With that cadre of [veteran troops in Nepal], did the ex-Gurkhas represent any sort of danger to the Nepalese Government?

BOEHM: No, they didn't represent any danger at all. They stayed out of politics and played no particular role in political life.

Q: That's interesting, because often when you've “taken them off the farm,” what will they do, “once they've seen Paree?”

BOEHM: You could keep them down on the farm. They'd seen “Paree” and just wanted to go back to their villages. They were very impressive. There was a kind of family tradition of service in the Gurkhas. An older brother would encourage his younger brother to join the Gurkhas, and probably his father and grandfather had also served. Then, at the end of their service, they'd go home [to Nepal].

Q: What about the role of the Indians [in Nepal]? Our relations with India weren't of the best.

BOEHM: Well, we knew that India was big brother in Nepal. The facts of geography, demography, and economics dictated that India would always be the dominant power [in the area]. There are plenty of Indians in Nepal. We saw that recently after the recent revolution [in Nepal], when the elected government came in. India had been angry with Nepal for some reason—I've forgotten now what the reason was. The Indians had denied Nepal access to the port of Calcutta, which is the main entrepot for Nepalese imports and exports. This was really having a crushing effect on the Nepalese economy. The first thing the new Nepalese Government did was to go down to New Delhi and surrender [to the Indians], in effect. India can put the screws on Nepal any time it wants to. The Nepalese know that. They resent India, as a small country next to a big country often does, whether it's Mexico and the United States or Luxembourg and Belgium. But the Nepalese know the facts. They know that they have to get along with India and that India has the last word on things.

Q: What about China?

BOEHM: At that time we didn't have diplomatic relations with China, but we were moving in that direction. This was some time after the Nixon overtures to China, but we still hadn't established formal, diplomatic relations. The Chinese had a very large embassy [in Nepal]. The Indians had a huge embassy. The British had a pretty big embassy. There would be a diplomatic corps function at the number two level once a month—lunch or something like that.

You would encounter the Chinese Ambassador and the Chinese DCM. Relations with us were quite cool. My recollection is that the signals from Washington indicated that it would be all right if you started social contacts on a more formal basis with the Chinese, even though we hadn't opened formal diplomatic relations. So, at one of these diplomatic corps luncheons, I took the Chinese DCM aside and asked him if he would come to lunch at my house. He said that he was occupied and was very busy. Obviously, he had no instructions. I invited him for a specific date, the next Thursday, I think. He said he couldn't

do it. I said, well, how about the following Thursday? You name the date. He said that he was really very busy and had no time for this. [Laughter]

That very afternoon it was announced that the United States and China would open embassies and would establish diplomatic relations. He called me up and said that his calendar had room for a luncheon. [Laughter] So I got to see him from time to time. He would invite me back. Once in a while we would have lunch or dinner. I don't think that much came of it, but we did have some contact and were able to get some feel for how China viewed India in Nepal, and that kind of thing.

China was then competing [with India] in Nepal. They had an assistance program, most of which involved construction projects in Nepal, using Chinese workers. They did the same thing in Pakistan, with the Karakoram Highway. They had, in fact, built a road connecting Kathmandu with China, which was opened up to Americans during my stay there. I wasn't able to make the trip, but the then Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Dillon Ripley, came down from China and visited Kathmandu, by way of that road. He was in the first group of American tourists who came through from Tibet. China was actively trying to promote as close connections with Nepal as possible. Ultimately, there really was no contest. As I say, India holds the cards [in Nepal].

Q: You left Nepal in 1980.

BOEHM: I had said that I would spend a three year tour in Nepal. I stayed there for two years. A couple of things happened at roughly the same time. Ambassador Doug Heck's tour came to an end. He was to be succeeded by a political appointee at that point. My former boss in Ankara, Jim Spain, who had been DCM there when I was Political-Military Counselor, was made Ambassador to Turkey. He was looking for a DCM. Jim offered me that job. I was perfectly happy in Nepal and was utterly absorbed by that fascinating place. The culture is a remarkable one—the most exotic that you can imagine. The country is picturesque. I would happily have stayed for the third year, but the DCM job in Ankara was

a good one. It kind of reversed my own fortunes which, as you have seen, had been sort of declining. [Laughter] So I accepted that job and was ready to go there when suddenly a new Ambassador to Nepal, a political appointee...

Q: Who was that?

BOEHM: A lawyer who had been, at one point, in the Legal Adviser's Office in the State Department. He was a Democrat and had gone to New York when Ed Koch was elected Mayor. He was one of the deputy or assistant mayors. I guess that Koch got him the job of Ambassador to Nepal. He wanted that job because he was a mountain climber. [Laughter]

He made no secret of the fact that that was why he wanted to go there, which, I thought, was something less than totally tactful on his part. This was in the interviews in the Washington newspapers, which were played right back to Kathmandu. I was due to leave a month or two after he arrived. Shortly before the time of my planned departure came, he said, “Well, I don't want you to leave. I'd like you to stay on.” I replied, “Well, I'm already scheduled and paneled [before the personnel boards] and due to leave.” He said, “What can I do?” As a dedicated, professional diplomat, I had to tell him that he could send a telegram to the State Department, telling them that he wanted me to stay in Kathmandu.

He went back to his office and an hour later he came into my office with a draft telegram and said, “What do you think of this?” I read it and could see at a glance that it wasn't going to do the job. Well, how much are you really required to do as a dedicated, professional diplomat? I'd done all that I was really required to do. I didn't have to say, “Look, if you'll let me rewrite it, it'll do the job.” [Laughter] So I said, “If you want to send it, go ahead and send it.” He sent it, and by return telegram, of course, he was turned down [by the Department].

Q: It's enough that you supply the rope, but you don't have to tie the knot.

BOEHM: You don't have to tie the knot around your own neck. So I left. And he left Kathmandu not long afterwards, because the Democrats lost the election after that. By early in the following year, after a six or eight month tour, he was gone. But I was also gone. I went back to Turkey.

Q: Well, you were in Ankara from 1980 to 1983 as DCM?

BOEHM: For three years, yes.

Q: What was the political situation in Turkey at that time?

BOEHM: The political situation was this. Let me go back to my first tour [in Ankara]. I went there in 1971. I arrived about six months after there had been a military takeover, which had ousted then Prime Minister Demirel. Eventually, of course, the Parliament and democracy were restored. When I arrived back in Turkey in 1980, the country had a democratic system. The Prime Minister was none other than the same Demirel. [Laughter] It was a functioning, parliamentary democracy.

Within a few weeks of my arrival Demirel was once again thrown out by the military. There had been a lot of terrorism, which was a very serious problem, indeed—bombs going off and assassinations, right in the heart of downtown Ankara. The explosions were called banner bombs, bombs installed in a banner. If you put a banner along a fence, it would blow up. The situation was getting very nasty, and the government wasn't controlling it. So in accordance with what you might call tradition in Turkey the military, who regarded themselves as the guardians of democracy, thought that the threat required them to move in. Once again, Demirel was out. The military were in power, then, throughout the rest of my stay there.

Q: A couple of things about this military takeover. One of the prime functions of political reporting at any Embassy is anticipating when the coup d'etat is going to happen, and all of that. Watching terrorism and knowing the military tradition in Turkey, how did the

Embassy view the situation? You were newly arrived, but you were an old Turkish hand. How did you go about figuring if and when this was going to happen?

BOEHM: Well, you use all the normal means. You get to know as many people as you can who might be able to help you out on the subject. You keep in touch with them—especially military people. You find out what they're thinking. You analyze the causes which might lead to a takeover and see how that's going. In this case terrorism was a serious consideration. The military were grumbling a bit. Then you have intelligence sources as well. You have the military attach#s, and our attach#s always had very good connections with the Turkish military. The attach#s would be prepared to find out from their best contacts what the thinking in the Turkish military was. You had CIA reports. You check all of these various intelligence sources and try to analyze the situation as best you can.

Now, in the case of the 1980 takeover which, as I recall, was in September or October—September, I think—one of the Army attach#s [gave us an indication]. We were examining this situation every day as to whether it was or was not going to happen—is this the time, or when? One of our more junior military attach#s spotted a column of tanks lined up along a road near downtown Ankara. He checked around and concluded, on the basis of what he saw and could find out, that the military were just about to take over. We looked at this report and checked with a few Turks as to what those tanks were doing. We were told that there was nothing unusual about that. The police had asked for assistance. They were expecting another terrorist attack, and the tanks were to assist the police. That very night those tanks moved in, and the military took over. It was a coup. I would not say that we had rejected the report but I would say that we had not reached the same conclusion as our young military attach# had reached. But he was absolutely right. He said, “This is it,” and it was.

Q: In Turkey at that time, the military were obviously very important. They were in and out of power all the time. Did our Army, Navy, and Air Force make a special effort to have

really good officers assigned to Ankara as our attach#s? In some countries our military attach#s [are not always top notch people]. The attach# service is often regarded as a retirement posting. The attach#s are all right, but they really don't add an awful lot. Did you find that the attach# service was sensitive enough?

BOEHM: Yes and no. We had both kinds of attach#s. We had some very able Army, Navy, and Air Force attach#s. We had others who were less effective. Part of the problem there [in Ankara] was that we had a large military assistance program, which was headed by a major general, with three service sections—Army, Navy, and Air Force—each headed by a brigadier general [or equivalent]. We had general officers all over the place. The senior Turkish military basically ignored our military attach#s. They wanted to deal only with the military assistance people for obvious reasons. So, to the extent that you had military to military contact, it tended to be more with the military assistance advisory group—JUSMAT, or Joint United States Military Assistance Group in Turkey. The attach#s really had to fight for what they could get. Some of the attach#s were effective and successful, but they were heavily overshadowed by the military aid mission, which traditionally always wanted to stay out of the intelligence field. So not only did our attach#s have difficulty talking to the Turks but they sometimes found it impossible to talk to the US military assistance people. [Laughter] The military assistance people wouldn't tell the attach#s anything because they wanted to stay out of the intelligence field altogether.

Q: From your perspective, what were the Turkish terrorists after? They were setting off bombs. You had a democratic Turkish government. It was no secret that if you set off enough bombs, the Turkish military would take over. Was this the goal of the terrorists?

BOEHM: I think that the goal was to create as much chaos as possible, in the hope of exploiting the situation that developed or exploiting a military takeover. It didn't work. Most of the Turkish people, I think, were not interested in revolution and basically approved of the military taking over for a specific purpose—that is, to calm things down and move the terrorists out of the way. The Turkish people want democracy. They have shown that in

elections and, in fact, the military recognize this. They moved out. They always have. They seize power, deal with whatever the crucial problem is that caused the coup, and then they move out.

In the case of the 1980 coup, of course, they rewrote the constitution to eliminate some of the constitutional problems that had made it difficult for the Parliament to function.

I still recall that, during my first tour [in Ankara], the Parliament had not been set aside at that time. It was allowed to continue functioning. A Prime Minister was appointed. This was in the 1970-1971 period. When it came time to elect the President—Parliament elects the President—the tradition had been that only a member of Parliament can be elected President. The Chief of the Turkish General Staff, a man by the name of Gurler, resigned from the Army and was appointed to the Senate, thus becoming eligible to be elected President. But then the Parliament refused to elect Gurler. The military tried to threaten them. The Air Force flew its planes over the Parliament building, waggling their wings and thereby suggesting, “Elect Gurler.” [Laughter] But Parliament wouldn't do it. Eventually, they elected a retired admiral, Koroturk.

The point is that the parliamentary system was almost unworkable and very, very awkward and cumbersome. It was hard to get a majority on anything. The 1980 coup d'etat set about restructuring the political system. The military wrote a new constitution. Eventually, elections were held, and the military moved out of power. Turkey is once again a democracy, and Demirel is President.

Q: Some time had gone by since the Cyprus flare-up in 1974. How was this Greek and Turkish Cyprus situation in this 1980-1983 period?

BOEHM: Still dicey. Always dicey. Cyprus was a political issue at that point. There was really no military issue, because the Turks had a lot of troops in northern Cyprus, and the situation had basically stabilized. You had UN forces there which had been in place even

before 1974, with contingents from a number of UN countries. Sweden, the British, the Austrians, the Canadians, and others were there.

So the situation in Cyprus, in that sense, was militarily stable. But politically, it wasn't. The Greeks always made an issue of the Cyprus problem. Athens did, and, of course, so did Nicosia. The Government of Cyprus, which controlled only the southern two-thirds of the island, was Greek. It was the only government we recognized. Of course, they also wanted to keep the issue alive. The UN was the main focal point for that—and Washington, during US election years.

When Jimmy Carter was elected President, he had the support of the Greek-American community, partly because he had made commitments about Cyprus.

We had cut off military assistance to Turkey in 1974 or the following year, 1975, when the Turks moved troops into Cyprus. Carter saw the reason—for NATO considerations—to restore military assistance to Turkey. So he made a deal with Congress, saying that if we restored military assistance to Turkey, this assistance could be used to get the Turks to get out or back off on Cyprus. But the Turks didn't. The Greek Lobby in Washington, in the United States, was always working on this issue. They worked on Carter as they worked on every presidential candidate, extracting commitments, none of which could be fulfilled.

So at that point, as I said, Cyprus was an issue, but not a military issue. The big Greek-Turkish issue in the 1980-1983 period, during my second tour there [in Ankara] was the Aegean Sea—the question of air space and the continental shelf [off Turkey]. Every time a Turkish military aircraft flew anywhere near one of the Greek islands which dot the Turkish coast, the Greeks would charge a violation of their air space. There was always a big argument going on, with basically minor incidents taking place. But the Greeks continued to keep things agitated.

Q: This was still a time when there were major concerns about the Soviets. The Soviets had moved just a little earlier into Afghanistan. We were very concerned about a Soviet

thrust through Iran, or something like that. How did Aegean Sea issues fit into all of this, with the continental shelf and so forth. Is there a solution, or is it just one of those things that will never go away? How did we see it?

BOEHM: First, you asked about the Soviet threat. Yes, the Soviet threat was the dominant consideration as we viewed Greek-Turkish relations. In Turkey itself this meant that the impact of Greek-Turkish disagreement on NATO was our big concern. For that reason, for example, we gave military assistance to Greece as well as Turkey in a proportion of 10 for Turkey to 7 for Greece. Although there was no legal requirement for this, there were those in Congress who felt that there was. In any case, they wanted it that way. So whatever we did for Turkey, we did 7/10 of that for Greece to try to keep things in balance and quiet. We tried to moderate relations between Greece and Turkey, but without great success. Relations kept flaring up. But the Soviet threat and NATO were the main considerations.

Then, of course, you had the whole question of the Bosporus and the Soviet Black Sea Fleet, which moved in and out, through the Turkish Straits between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The Soviet Black Sea Fleet was very active at that time. It was frequently in the Mediterranean. This was something that we watched very closely. I think that it was never a match for the US Sixth Fleet. There was no question of that, but the Soviet Black Sea Fleet was something that was there. You worried about it. You wondered where it would go. Neither the Sixth Fleet nor the Soviet Black Sea Fleet could make port visits to Cyprus. The Cypriots had decided that they didn't want either the Sixth Fleet or the Soviet Black Sea Fleet coming into port.

When I was later on my way out there to Cyprus as Ambassador, I stopped in London to call on the US admiral who commanded US Naval Forces in Europe and the Mediterranean. I had known him before. His staff briefed me, and they said that they would like to make port visits to Cyprus. They said that they would like me to arrange this. Washington had been waffling on this subject. I said, “Well, OK, but let me put this question to you before we reach any conclusion on this. If the Cypriots agree to allow US

Navy visits to Cyprus, with the proviso that they would also allow Soviet Black Sea Fleet visits to Cyprus, would you consider that we came out ahead or behind on that? Is that a price that you, as US Navy officers, would be willing to pay? I'd like you to study that question and let me have an answer to it."

At the end of the briefing I called on my old friend, the commander, a four-star admiral. I told him about the question I asked. I said that his people were urging me to arrange for port visits to Cyprus. I had put this question to them. He said, "You know, I'm not really interested in these port visits at all." [Laughter] I wondered what the hell his staff was talking about. That was the end of that. I never heard another word about it. I never got the report I asked for. It just dropped out of sight. This tells you something about how these staff questions are raised.

Q: Yes. It's on their agenda, and they want to rush it to death. Had our policy on Cyprus of withholding arms had much of an effect on Turkish military readiness?

BOEHM: Yes, it had. There certainly was serious degradation in readiness. Turkish armed forces depended very heavily on U. S. assistance. Most of their equipment was surplus or old stock that we gave them under the military assistance program. We gave them a lot of money under the program. We gave them a lot of economic assistance under the rubric of ESF, or Economic Support Funds, which are basically a budgetary grant, with no strings attached. So, yes, they did depend heavily on us. During the period when the aid was cut off, the readiness of Turkish forces underwent considerable degradation. Of course, by the time I got back there in 1980, President Carter had persuaded Congress to restore military assistance, which was beginning to come in again.

Q: Did we feel that the Soviets might try to do something at that time? Were we concerned about their doing anything with Greece or Turkey?

BOEHM: Well, in Turkey we were always concerned about the military situation, although it wasn't given the same degree of priority as the so-called Central Front in NATO. The

Southern Element of NATO was its right flank. But people were beginning to think at that time that what had been thought of as NATO's flank needed more attention. There had been trouble in Iran, and so it was receiving more attention, in strategic terms.

There was concern. The Soviets were very active. The Soviet Mediterranean Fleet was constantly moving in and out through the Turkish Straits. Turkey didn't want to stir up trouble with the Soviets. There was a long history of wars between Turkey and Russia —something like eight or nine of them. The Turks won the first half of them and lost the second half. The Crimean War was the last one that they came out ahead on. So there was a long history in this relationship and Turkish fear and concern about Russia. Turkey's main motive in joining NATO was this ancient, atavistic fear of Russia, which is well founded. So there was considerable Turkish concern. The deterioration of the Turkish armed forces was also a concern.

Q: At the time we are talking about here, there was a very hot and heavy war between Iran and Iraq, which were neighbors of Turkey. What was our view of this and did this have any political consequences?

BOEHM: Well, Turkey's view was that it wanted to stay out of the Iran-Iraq War. The Turks didn't want to throw their weight in on either side. Turkey has pretty extensive borders with both Iran and Iraq.

There was the problem of Iraq-based Kurds, who were part of a contiguous Kurdistan— a term which you could never use in Turkey, by the way. At the same time that the Turks sought to maintain close relations with the government in Baghdad, it sought to prevent Kurdish activity across the border. Also, the Turks wanted to be able to send troops to pursue Kurdish terrorists into northern Iraq, into Iraqi Kurdistan. They did that a few times. They said that they had the permission of the Iraqis, although it wasn't always clear that this was so. The Turks had the Kurdish problem, which conditioned their relations with Iraq and impelled them to want to maintain good terms with Iraq.

There was a lot of Turkish trade with Iran and still is. The Turks were concerned there about some of the activities of the Islamic extremists, which they feared might be reflected in Turkey. So they wanted to try to avoid that and remain on good terms with Tehran. In a word, they tried to remain on good terms with everybody and stay out of the Iran-Iraq War. They were successful in this respect.

Q: How did the U. S. feel about the Iran-Iraq War?

BOEHM: Well, as you recall, we were still living in the wake of the hostage crisis in Tehran. I think that there was probably a lot more pro-Iraq sentiment in the United States and in Washington than there was in Turkey. The Turks wanted to maintain a hands-off attitude. We certainly never had much sympathy for Iran at that point.

Again, I think that our main concern was to see the Iran-Iraq War stopped. The United States usually wants wars to stop. It supports UN efforts to arrange solutions, and that, of course, was what eventually happened there.

Q: You were in Turkey when the administration changed from the Democrats to a Republican in 1981. You arrived in Ankara in 1980. Let's look at the time when President Carter was still in office. Were we doing anything on the human rights side with the Kurds?

BOEHM: Yes. We did not focus so much on the Kurds as on allegations of torture in Turkish prisons. This allegedly still goes on today. The human rights community is still interested, including Amnesty International and others, as well as the State Department, although I haven't read the last couple of human rights reports on Turkey. Evidence is still allegedly found of torture in Turkey. The main focus of our human rights activity in Turkey was this question of torture.

Q: Did we get anywhere?

BOEHM: Yes. The Turks would listen to us and would claim to be taking steps. Torture was illegal in Turkey, of course, but that didn't mean that it stopped. The Turks would go from denial that torture was taking place to claims that they were taking effective steps, including the arrest of police accused of torturing someone. Sometimes the Turks would convict somebody. They were very sensitive on this issue and they had to be, because the whole Turkish relationship with Western Europe and the United States was related to this issue. The Turks were constantly being pilloried in the Council of Europe, usually on the initiative of the Greeks. The Council would pass resolutions denouncing Turkey for its human rights practices.

Turkey wanted to join—and still wants to join—the European Community, now the European Union. This issue of torture was an obstacle for them. When Greece succeeded in joining the European Union—and now I see that Cyprus is seeking to join—this somewhat diminished Turkey's hopes of joining, because the European Union operates on a basis of unanimity. The Greeks can fend off Turkey.

Turkey had all kinds of reasons for wanting to put up a show of concern about human rights. I think that they tried, but, after all, torture, you might say, is a long, long tradition. It's almost part of Turkish culture, and you can't change that overnight. I think that they're making a good faith effort to work on it. They probably haven't succeeded all that well.

Then the Kurdish issue, of course, has become a more prominent human rights question in recent years than it was in the early 1980's, although it was there at the time. In human rights terms, the Turks have tried to take steps to satisfy concerns about the treatment of Kurds by allowing them to use their own language, which was illegal in the early 1980's and before.

Look, there still are Kurdish terrorists attacking Turkish villages and military units and setting off bombs in Istanbul. Like almost anybody else, the Turks lash out pretty heavily in response. When they retaliate against a Kurdish village for harboring terrorists who

have just committed a terrorist act against Turks, it gets into the newspapers. There was a lot of that. They get a lot of bad publicity. They know this, and at times they feel sorry for themselves—perhaps a little too much so.

Q: How about the problem of drugs and narcotics?

BOEHM: I can't give you a current status report on that.

Q: I'm talking about the time when you were in Turkey.

BOEHM: That was a major issue. When I first arrived in Turkey in 1971, the United States had just persuaded Turkey to ban the cultivation of opium poppies. Turkey, in fact, did that, despite very heavy domestic political opposition. It's like any agricultural issue in the United States. You're going to see this now with tobacco in the United States. There is a concentrated, political group that is deprived of its living by this type of thing.

The same was true of opium poppy cultivation in Turkey. Those who grow the poppies are not addicts. They crush the seeds for poppy seed oil, which is not a narcotic and which they use as the basis for their cooking, and also sell. So a lot of the income of the farmers in one significant part of Turkey is derived from poppy cultivation. These farmers were put out of business, and they raised hell. Eventually, as the democratic process proceeded, Turkey decided that it would have to allow them to start cultivating poppies, but this time under very tightly controlled conditions, so that it couldn't leak out and become opium gum, morphine base, and heroin. The Turks established a system which was able to maintain very tight control of the poppy fields. They opened their own plant to process opium poppies into morphine for medicinal purposes and for export. That plant was at a place called Bolvadin. The plant was built by the Germans, but we probably paid for it, because we were making every effort to assist Turkey to stay out of the illegal opium business.

Q: Did you find at the time you were there in 1980-1983...

BOEHM: At that time the Turks were out of the business. There was some transit [of opium derivatives] from Iran and Afghanistan through Turkey toward Europe. There was some talk that there was some processing in Turkey of [opium derivatives] coming from countries farther East, which was then shipped to the West. There probably were some examples of that but, by and large, I had the impression at the time that the Turks were doing an effective job of enforcing the rules. Turkey was no longer a major player on the illegal international narcotics scene.

Q: A perpetual burr under our saddle for some years was Americans who got caught in Turkish jails for narcotics smuggling. What was the situation and how did you deal with it during this period?

BOEHM: It was both a consular and a political problem. I have to talk about both of these things. During my earlier tour in Turkey we had, for example, the famous “midnight express” case, involving Billy whatever his name was—a clean cut, good looking American boy who seems to have tried to smuggle illegal substances out of Turkey and got caught at the airport. He was in jail. That was basically a consular case. You want to make sure that he is decently treated and maybe gets even better treatment than Turkish citizens get, because the treatment of Turkish nationals [in Turkish jails] is not that great. We tried to ensure that US prisoners were treated in accordance with civilized standards. And the Turks were not inhumane. I visited some pretty rudimentary Turkish jails, but the treatment of the prisoners was not inhumane, as far as I could tell.

We had this kid there—a famous case. It became a big deal, with international coverage and, eventually, a movie. There was a lot of flim-flam involved in that. The guy was in a jail in Istanbul. He kept wanting to be transferred. The Turks had a separate jail for foreign prisoners. He kept asking to be put in that jail. We finally arranged for him to be transferred there, but he wouldn't go. He said, “No, I've decided that I'd rather stay here. I've got a lot of friends here among the Turkish prisoners.” When you had an American in jail with Turkish prisoners, the Turkish prisoners tended to help him out. They don't get fed—

they cook their own food and all of that. They do a lot for themselves which prisoners in American jails don't do. A lot of Americans are incapable of doing for themselves, even their own laundry. So the Turkish prisoners would take the foreigners in hand and help them out—feed them and keep them alive. As prisons go, they were by no means the worst that you can imagine.

But this was an international case. There was a lot of pressure back in the US to get the kid out. Eventually, he did get out. That was at the early stage. There was always a problem, especially if the person arrested was in the US forces stationed in Turkey. They really were a big problem. You just dealt with these things as best you could.

The United States was in a very ambiguous position, because on the one hand—during the early period—we were urging the Turks to take very strict measures against narcotics. Then, on the other hand, every time an American was arrested on a narcotics charge, we were in there trying to get him out. The Turks said, “Look, how do you want this? You can't have it both ways. If you want strong measures, we're taking strong measures. Get off our backs.” But you know how things work. We have both objectives. We try to pursue them at the same time and do the best we can.

During my second tour in Turkey during the early 1980's we had begun to negotiate—and Turkey was one of the first—what were known in the vernacular as Prisoner Exchange Treaties. For example, if an American is convicted and sent to jail in Country X—or somebody from Country X goes to jail in the US—there is a process by which they can be repatriated to their own country to serve out whatever sentence they got in the country where they were tried. We signed one of those agreements with Turkey.

Q: When was this?

BOEHM: This was in 1982. We negotiated that agreement with the Turkish Foreign Ministry and brought it to a successful conclusion. We did actually get some Americans who were in jail in Turkey on narcotics charges sent back to the US, where they were

instantly released on parole. [Laughter] So it amounted to a kind of fraud. But it was a way for the Turks to get rid of these people without appearing to yield to pressure. They could say, “The same applies to our people over in American jails. We can get them out.”

Q: When you were there, the elections of 1980 took place, Reagan was elected, and you got a new Ambassador, Robert Strausz-Hup#.

BOEHM: The appointment of Mr. Strausz-Hup# was the principal result of the elections of 1980, as far as I was concerned. My boss, Ambassador Jim Spain, who had brought me there as DCM, left. He'd been there for only about a year when this happened. I had been in Turkey for only about four or five months when the elections took place—a few months before the change in ambassador. Obviously, it was unsettling, and I wasn't sure what was going to happen. Ambassador Strausz-Hup# wanted me to stay on. I did until we had a disagreement and I suggested that maybe I should leave. Although he didn't want me to leave, he said, “I think that you're probably right. Two people with strong wills probably shouldn't be yoked together.” He agreed that I could leave.

I informed the Department that I wanted a transfer. They didn't make any serious effort that I could discern to find me another job. So I was there for another year, for a total of two years as DCM to Ambassador Robert Strausz-Hup#. I had been there a year with Jim Spain.

Q: I'm interested in how these things work. Here were two people. Strausz-Hup# had been a political appointee. He went around collecting ambassadorships. He'd been Ambassador in three or four other places.

BOEHM: Yes, he had.

Q: I think that he came out of the academic world.

BOEHM: He did. He was, in fact, a very distinguished academic who had founded the Foreign Policy Institute, or whatever it's called, at the University of Pennsylvania. He had written a number of books. He's a very distinguished historian and student of international affairs. He was fairly old by the time he went to Turkey, but still had a first rate mind. He would analyze things in a very broad way, in historical dimensions. He was a very interesting man to be exposed to.

As I said, we had a disagreement. Everybody agreed that I could leave, but...

Q: Well, how did this work out? Did you...

BOEHM: It didn't work out too well, from my point of view. After I'd said, “Well, I think I should leave,” he said, “Wait a minute, think about it.” I thought about it and said, “I still think I ought to leave.” So he said, “OK.” Then relations became more harmonious. We didn't have any further disagreements of that kind. However, as I said, I had been there for almost a year with him at that time, and it was another year before I left. So I served him as DCM for almost two years.

The job as DCM at Ankara normally led on to an ambassadorship. In my case that didn't happen right away. When I left Ankara in 1983, I was unassigned.

So I was asked to attend the 39th UN General Assembly as a member of the U. S. Delegation. They have advisers on the Delegation from each geographic bureau [in the State Department], and I was asked to be the adviser for the Bureau of European Affairs. So I spent three months in New York at the General Assembly in that capacity. I still had no assignment when that was over.

Q: I would imagine that, particularly the European adviser...

BOEHM: Would have nothing to do. [Laughter]

Q: Yes. I can understand that the African adviser could add some expertise, or something like that. However, everybody on the Delegation knows about Europe.

BOEHM: And the European countries don't need to be told how to vote on the various issues. Occasionally, you'd try to find out what a Delegation was thinking about this or that issue. The issues were not European issues, but the Europeans each had a vote, so the European adviser was unlike the African or Latin American adviser, who had plenty to do.

Q: I know that you don't like to get into personalities, but Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick was quite a phenomenon. What was your impression of her and her operating style?

BOEHM: Well, it was fairly good. I saw her mostly at morning staff meetings. She handled that well. Everybody got a chance to say what was on his or her mind on the issues likely to come up that day and be discussed, and what was on the UN agenda. She would give instructions on what positions should be taken on various issues, and then there was the reporting. On those rare occasions when I had to see her on some foreign policy issue, I found that she listened very closely and intelligently. She had no difficulty in taking in whatever point you were making. Sometimes, she would act on it. So, basically, my impression of her was quite good.

Q: This was during the initial weaning or acclimatization period for the Reagan administration to get used to the UN. At the beginning of the time the Reagan administration came in they indicated that they were not happy with the UN. There was a feeling that this really is not a necessary thing and maybe we wouldn't die a painful death if the US got out of the UN, and the UN got out of the U. S. I think that that was one of the phrases in use. This was a little later. How did you...

BOEHM: There was a lot of talk, centering around the UN budget, of waste and fat and so forth. “Pork” is a term which has been used a lot in the past couple of weeks, though in a different context. [A reference to Republican and Democratic charges and countercharges

in late 1994 about controversial portions of a crime bill.] We always took a forward position on the need to cut down on waste. We had people coming up from Washington to talk about this with the international staff at the UN. By that time I think that there was no longer any serious thought being given somehow to pulling out of the UN or getting the UN out of the US. I don't think that this was ever serious, anyway.

Q: There was some rhetoric, but this was early in the Reagan administration. People sometimes talk about early Carter or "early Reagan" positions, which were part of the learning process [of those administrations].

BOEHM: Their positions were a little narrower at first.

Q: Then what did you do next?

BOEHM: I went through to the end of the year, 1983, and then I began 1984, still unassigned. I never would submit a wish list for assignments. I felt that I was too old for that and had been in the service too long. I felt that it would be unseemly to submit a list of 10 places that I might like to go to. I felt that I would wait for the system to deliver something. Sometimes it didn't. In this case the system hadn't delivered anything by the time I left the UN, and I was still floating around the Department. I was asked to help out on the Board of Examiners [of the Foreign Service]. I was not assigned to it, as a regular assignment, as I had not been assigned to the Inspector General's office. It was pretty indefinite, but I went to the Board of Examiners and helped out there for six months.
Q: These things always change. Could you talk about what you were doing, what you were seeing, what the candidates were like, and how the system worked at the Board of Examiners?

BOEHM: Well, I served on one of the traveling panels [which went around the US]. When you and I joined the Foreign Service, there were no traveling panels.

Q: No, we came to Washington. [Laughter]

BOEHM: To Washington, where you faced some very senior officers at the ambassadorial level. Whoever happened to be in Washington in those days helped out on the Board of Examiners. By the time I was at the Board of Examiners, the number of applications [to enter the Foreign Service] was enormous. The desire to make sure that the income of an applicant played no role in the process of selection dictated that, instead of having everybody come to Washington at their own expense, the panels traveled around the country. In any case, it would have been impractical to give all of the oral examinations in Washington. We would set up a regional base for a week, and then people living in the region would come in for the oral examination.

I was on some of those traveling panels. You'd go to Chicago, for example, or Boston, or wherever. I went to those two places. You'd stay there a week, and everybody who was to be examined would come in. You would put them through the oral examination, which then was a one-day process, unlike the three and a half or four day written examination process. You would grade the candidates. Some passed and some didn't. The score on the oral exam then became part of the total score for each candidate. They had already taken a short written examination. You had those results, as well as the results of the oral examination. You had the curriculum vitae of the various candidates, describing their education and previous experience. You'd add all this together. The Board of Examiners did that in Washington, combining all of these elements and giving them a final grade. On the basis of this, the candidates would be offered an appointment [in the Foreign Service] or not.

Q: What was your impression of the candidates whom you examined?

BOEHM: My impression of the candidates was that they were not at the level of Foreign Service Officers when I entered the service. This is the old crock syndrome. That shouldn't come as any great surprise to you. There is a generation gap problem here. The style of people has changed from what it was 40 years ago. Maybe I reacted negatively to a style which is perfectly normal in today's culture and society. I was not very much impressed

by most of the candidates but I have to say that the Service still gets some awfully good young people coming in. However, the proportion of people coming in who are really impressive is much smaller than it used to be. One of the reasons has been the effort [made by the Department] to democratize the Foreign Service and to eliminate any trace of eliteness. I think that this is a bad mistake. Some 40 or 50 years ago the Foreign Service considered itself to be an elite service. That didn't mean that you had to be rich...

Q: Some of our best people, such as George Kennan or Robert Murphy came from rather modest backgrounds...

BOEHM: Or Phil Habib. You can think of all kinds of people. [The Foreign Service] was never an elite in the sense of being confined to a small group or class. It was a meritocracy.

My view of how to recruit for any kind of service is that, first, you set out the requirements of the job. Then you recruit people who can meet the requirements. You don't begin by deciding what kind of people you want to recruit and then setting the requirements accordingly. But that's what, in effect, we've done in our efforts to have the Foreign Service "look like America." It seems to me that we have degraded the Service. It is not as good a group of people as it used to be and doesn't function as well.

Q: I did this kind of work for a year, 1975-1976. I think that one of the things that came as a shock to me, because I had majored in history, was what seemed to be almost a lack of knowledge of history on the part of the candidates. I examined people who had passed the written exam, yet could not place the Industrial Revolution period in context. They would get World War II and the American Civil War kind of mixed up.

BOEHM: That tallies exactly with my own observations. I was dismayed by the lack of general knowledge that one would have considered to be part of any educated person's background.

Q: We're not talking about just ordinary people. We're talking about a highly selected group that you need. They had gone through this supposedly rigorous written examination. If a candidate came up who, in current parlance, was an African-American or an Hispanic-American, would you find yourself pulling your punches or using a different standard to...

BOEHM: Not consciously. The system itself was taking care of that. The grading system was designed to identify people who were called “near passes”—people who came within shouting distance of a passing grade. Then they would use “near passes” to recruit people with a minority background on a probationary basis. The members of the board didn't have to make allowances, because the system already was doing that. I didn't consciously pull punches or anything like that, but maybe unconsciously I did.

Q: I take it that you left that experience with a certain feeling of less than exhilaration about the new generation.

BOEHM: Yes. I'm afraid that that was the case.

Q: We'll pick up the next time when you left the Board of Examiners and somebody got around to assigning you to be an ambassador.

BOEHM: It get's a little more cheerful. — Q: Today is September 6, 1994. Well, Dick, let's pick up where we left off. There you were in the Board of Examiners, sort of the Siberia of the State Department. How did your name pop up [for an ambassadorship]?

BOEHM: How it popped up I don't know, Stuart, or how they focused on me. The time came to appoint an ambassador to Cyprus, and my name was among those being considered. Actually, I was on the road. I think I was either in Boston or Chicago doing these oral examinations when I was phoned from Washington by the Under Secretary for Management. He said, “We've picked you to be the State Department's nominee for Ambassador to Cyprus.” Of course, you know what that means. It means that the nomination goes to the White House. Beside the State Department nominee, you might

have a number of other nominees coming from elsewhere, political or otherwise. So that was the first step.

Of course, I'd served for six years in Turkey at that point [1984]. Knowing the ins and outs of the Cyprus situation, which might have been a plus, was also a minus when you came from that kind of background.

Q: Particularly when you're thinking about the Greek Lobby.

BOEHM: The Greek Lobby and the Government of Cyprus itself, the only Cyprus that we recognized. Cyprus had already been partitioned. But the only government we recognized for all of Cyprus was the Greek Cypriot government in Nicosia. So I wasn't sure how this was going to play. I assumed—and rightly, as it turned out—that I would be suspect among the Greeks, both the Greek Lobby in Washington and the Greek Cypriot government. I pointed this out to the Under Secretary when he phoned me. I said, “Was the panel that picked me as the Department's nominee aware of the fact that I've spent six years in Turkey—two tours?” He said, “Yes, they were. It bothered some of them, but I took the position that no career Foreign Service Officer should in any way be penalized or impeded in his career by virtue of his previous service. And that seemed to convince them.” So I said, “OK, then.”

The nomination went forward to the White House, and my name was chosen as the one to be sent to the Senate. Of course, that's the next step in the process. All of this was happening around April or May. My name went to the Senate. Then I had the usual, cliff hanging situation in which you're not sure [of the outcome]. This was an election year.

Q: This was 1984?

BOEHM: It was 1984. You don't know whether the Senate is going to get around to taking action on these nominations or not, before the elections. But in due course, as I recall, in

August the Senate decided to go ahead and have the hearings for a certain number of ambassadors.

Well, I was in close touch with the Department's Congressional liaison people to see what might be coming up at the hearings—or when they would take place, exactly. I found that our Bureau of Congressional Relations then, as always, was not very competent. They didn't seem to know very much but they finally called me and gave me about two days' notice of the hearings. They said, “There will be four of you.” (That is, four nominees for four different embassies.) “There will be one member of the [Senate Foreign Relations] Committee present. Each one of you will be asked one question, and that will be it. It's really a pro forma hearing.”

So on the appointed day I went [to the Committee chambers]. I looked around for the other three who were supposed to be there. And they weren't there. I was the only nominee there. I looked for the one Senator who was going to be in the chair. I saw five or six [members of the Committee] there. The whole Greek Lobby had turned up. They kept me there for an hour. They asked me very difficult questions. Difficult in the sense, not that I didn't know the answers, but in the sense that the answers, which would reflect either an historic event or U. S. Government or administration policy, were unlikely to be well received by the Committee or by Cyprus itself.

Of course, this is an old, familiar problem. I was certainly not the first [ambassadorial nominee] to encounter open Senatorial confirmation hearings for ambassadors—especially those who are going to countries where there is some kind of delicate problem. [Nominees may be compelled] to discuss questions which may create big problems for them when they arrive at the post. I had that possibility very much in mind during these hearings and was trying to avoid making statements that would jeopardize my ability to function, once I got to Cyprus, with either the Greek or Turkish Cypriots. (We dealt with the Turkish Cypriots as a community, not as a state.) The Committee wasn't in a mood to let me get away with that. They wanted to get clear, firm statements of a kind which

I preferred not to make. They displayed signs of peevishness. I might say that Senator Tsongas in particular indulged himself in outbursts, saying how fed up he was with these nominees who come up here. [He said that] all they want to do is to get away as easily as possible, without saying anything. He was perfectly right. [Laughter] That was a play for the crowd, so you sort of ignore that.

However, as I said, it was tough, but I got through the hour. I was forced to defend the administration's policy of giving military assistance to Turkey. I put this in the NATO context which, it struck me, was perfectly understandable, but it didn't go down well in Cyprus. A day or two later the Embassy in Nicosia sent a telegram to the Department, as they normally would, of course, reporting on the local press play, because the Cypriot newspapers had covered the hearings. They had people there.

The press play was this: The editorials in most of the [Greek] Cypriot newspapers demanded that the government withdraw its agreement to my appointment. [Laughter] Well, the Government of Cyprus did not withdraw its agreement. So, in due course, I went to Cyprus. But I knew, of course, that I was going to have to work very hard to overcome the impression of bias on one side or the other.

There was a curious aftermath of the hearings. One of the Senators present [at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings] that day was Senator Sarbanes.

Q: He's of Greek background from Maryland.

BOEHM: Yes, a Greek-American. A good man and one I like and admire and on whom I had called before the hearings. He of course joined with the others in asking me some difficult questions. By the way, the Republicans then had a majority in the Senate. The chairman of the Committee was Senator Lugar. He was the only Republican there. Everybody else was a Democrat, including the Greek Lobby.

That evening I was invited to a reception at the Greek Embassy in Washington. The Greek Ambassador was an old friend of mine who had been Greek Ambassador in Ankara during my three year stay there. He had seen me in a Turkish context and still didn't consider me to be untouchable. Well, I arrived at the Greek Embassy and was chatting with the Greek Ambassador in the receiving line, when in walks Senator Sarbanes. He walked up to me and said, “Why didn't you tell me that you were a friend of George Papoulias?” George Papoulias was the Greek Ambassador to the United States. I said, “I didn't see what that had to do with anything, Senator.” [Laughter] The implication on his part was that, if he had known that, he would have taken it easier on me.

Then Senator Sarbanes said a very surprising thing. He took me aside and said, “You know, Bill Schaufele was not our fault.” You may not know the history of Bill Schaufele.

Q: No, I don't.

BOEHM: Very few people probably remember. Bill Schaufele was nominated to be Ambassador to Greece. During the hearings [before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee] somebody had asked him about the Dodecanese Islands, which are the Greek islands which lie right off the coast of Turkey. One of them is sort of a plug in the mouth of every Turkish port. Schaufele had—probably unwisely—referred to them as an “accident of history.” This infuriated the Greeks, and the government in Athens actually withdrew its agreement for Ambassador Schaufele, who never went to Athens. He went instead to Poland, which was not a bad outcome. But Senator Sarbanes was still feeling some guilt about this. He was on a guilt trip and he wanted me to know that it was the State Department's clarifying statement issued to explain Schaufele's remark that irretrievably had torn it. So Senator Sarbanes put the blame on the Department of State.

I thought it was a kind of funny thing to say, but the simple fact is that, as I said before, those Congressional hearings, it seems to me, can be very damaging to the functioning of

our ambassadors. The least thing that we ought to do would be to hold them in executive session [i.e., closed hearings], if a delicate situation exists.

So anyway I was confirmed and went to Cyprus.

Q: You served in Cyprus from 1984 to 1987?

BOEHM: That's correct.

Q: Before you went to Cyprus, you had obviously prepared yourself. You read the cables and you talked to various people, including members of Congress. What were American interests and concerns in Cyprus at that time, as you saw them before you went out?

BOEHM: Of course, as I said, I had spent six years in the region in Turkey and had been a Cyprus-watcher. I was aware of the issues involved in Cyprus. The principal issue for us, of course, was the impact of the Cyprus problem, as it was always referred to, on Greek-Turkish relations and, therefore, on the harmonious operation of NATO. That was our big concern and that was the one, of course, which I had had to refer to when I testified before the Committee about US military assistance to Turkey. Then, of course, there were other concerns. There was an issue of a few Americans who had been in Cyprus at the time of the Turkish military intervention in 1974. They had disappeared and were still missing—unaccounted for and presumably dead, but their families, in some cases, had not reached that conclusion. They could not or would not accept that conclusion. So there was a question regarding the whereabouts of certain American citizens.

Those were our interests, really. There was the NATO consideration and Greek-Turkish relations and their impact on NATO. I should mention that there are a large number of Cypriot-Americans who fall under the rubric of Greek-Americans. A lot of Greek-Americans in fact are Cypriot-Americans. You have the same kind of interest you have in any country where there is a large and active, hyphenated-American population.

Q: But Greek-Americans are probably better connected, as witnessed by the fact that two Senators out of the 100 in the Senate are Greek-American, plus the fact that there are a lot of Greek-American members of the House of Representatives.

BOEHM: Not just the Greek-American Senators but other Senators who have Greek-American constituencies,. This is the situation with quite a few others.

Q: When you went to Cyprus, was there any feeling that it was up to the United States to get the Turks out of the island and turn it back basically to Greek rule?

BOEHM: There was some history there, again, in the NATO context, of what the US should, could, or would do about the Cyprus problem. It wasn't a new problem in 1974 when the Turks sent their troops in. It had been going on for 10 years before that. After Cyprus became independent in 1960, the trouble between Greek and Turkish Cypriots started almost immediately. This had led to fighting in the early 1960's. The UN had gone in at that point. There was a UN peacekeeping force there. Then you had the 1974 events. The US provided a good part of the funding for the UN peacekeeping force. Although we didn't have troops there ourselves, we were paying a lot of the freight. Then, because the US is the leader of NATO, it always gets involved in things of this kind. We were seeking to foster a solution to the Cyprus problem. But at the time and for some time before I went out there, the US did not wish to play the leading role as negotiator, mediator, arbitrator, or conciliator. The UN was the chosen instrument to do this. It happened that at the time I went to Cyprus the Secretary General of the United Nations was Perez De Cuellar, a Peruvian who, in an earlier incarnation, had been the special representative to Cyprus of a previous Secretary General of the UN. He was very familiar with the Cyprus problem and became personally involved in trying to foster a solution. This was a good development. It was a plus for us because we could support the efforts of the UN Secretary General, rather than trying to propose and broker solutions of our own. This was also a good development because it was pretty clear that there wasn't going to be a solution. The positions of the two sides were too far apart. Therefore, it was very convenient to have the

Secretary General of the UN out there doing the job. Whenever we were asked to make a pronouncement on this issue, we would simply say, “We support the efforts of the UN Secretary General.”

Of course, behind the scenes that support could take a rather active form. We were very active in talking to the government of Cyprus—that is, the Greek Cypriots—and the Turkish Cypriot community. We referred to the Turkish Cypriots and their part of Cyprus as a community and not as a government or as a state. We dealt with them and their leader, Rauf Denktash, a very deft politician and skillful diplomat. He had been involved in the Cyprus issue for a long time. Since the very beginning of the troubles on Cyprus he had been very much involved and for quite some time he had been the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community.

We referred to him as “His Excellency, Mr. Denktash.” [Laughter] Washington had come up with that term as an acceptable form of address. He accepted that. He would have liked to have us call him “Mr. President,” but we didn't.

So, we'd lean on both sides and tell them, “Look, the Secretary General has made a reasonable, sensible proposal which is the best you're ever going to get, so take it.” Which they did not.

Q: Did you have any instructions from Secretary of State George Shultz or anyone else? Did you have any particular list of things to do, other than the normal, ambassadorial kind of thing?

BOEHM: My instructions were all very general. I knew what my instructions were. I don't recall that I received anything that might be called instructions and signed Shultz. Our policy there was very clear. I knew how the Embassy was to play its role—which was as I just described it, supporting the efforts of the United Nations Secretary General. There were a lot of things that nobody can instruct you on because you don't foresee them.

That's why they try to find an experienced, seasoned career officer to send into dicey situations.

Q: Could you describe our Embassy in Nicosia and how it operated?

BOEHM: First, let me describe the Embassy physically. The Embassy was housed in what had formerly been two adjacent apartment buildings, each one three or four stories high. They had previously been connected by a kind of Bridge of Sighs that had been constructed to enable the Ambassador, who lived at the top of one of the two buildings, to go back and forth without getting wet, if it was raining. One whole building and the lower half of the other building were the chancery. The upper half of the other building was the Ambassador's residence. It was a perfectly functional building. It wasn't grand and didn't look like much, but it worked well. The interior of the building was functional, from the representational point of view. You could certainly use it. There was a decent diningroom and a large livingroom. You couldn't get hundreds of people into it for a reception, but it was all right and served the purpose.

When I went out there, the architectural plans had already been completed to build a new chancery and residence. In fact, during my first year in Cyprus the architects came out and showed us the plans, which were ready to go. I thought that they were very good. They asked our comments on it. We could say, “Well, if you have a large reception, say, where are we going to put the cars that people come in?” We had a chance to comment in that way. The architects took account of them and made some modifications to the plans to accommodate our practical or common-sense approach, based on experience.

I thought that just maybe I might get to live in that new building. Then, as time went by, I thought that I might get to break the ground on the new building. But I didn't get to do either of those things. They kept changing the plans because of security considerations. It's really ridiculous. They kept deciding that they had to do more or something different. Then somebody else would stick an oar in.

It finally was built. I haven't seen it, in fact. It would have been pretty splendid, I think. It was built on a large plot of ground that belonged to Kykko Monastery, a large Greek Orthodox establishment. They had a large plot of ground in Nicosia, although the monastery itself was located elsewhere in Cyprus. They gave us or sold us what I think was a 99-year lease. One corner of this large lot was big enough for a big Embassy, right across the street from the new Soviet Embassy, which was built quickly.

The Soviets proceeded differently. They decided to build an Embassy. They got a piece of ground. Whether they picked it because it was across the street from our Embassy or not, I don't know. Then they brought in their own work crew and built it very quickly while we were still fiddling around with our plans. Up went the new Soviet Embassy.

Otherwise, the American Embassy had the usual personnel and spectrum of Washington agencies represented. We had a Military Attach# office, and USIS was there, of course, and others. As usual, the other agencies, when you added them all up, considerably outnumbered the State Department contingent. The total number of official Americans assigned there was around 40 or 50. Then we had, of course, the full array of local employees, who were Greek Cypriots.

We had an office on the Turkish side. There was a Turkish Cypriot man, who had been the senior local employee before Cyprus was split. Once the split came, he couldn't stay on the Greek side. He was over on the Turkish side, where he ran this little office. He was really a useful person because he was our only resident presence over there. The Ambassador also had a beach house on the North coast of Cyprus, in the Turkish sector. It was very useful. We couldn't call on people who called themselves officials of the Turkish Cypriot government in their offices, because this would have been taken as a form of recognition of their status. The only person that we could call on was “His Excellency, Mr. Denktash.” We didn't call on Turkish Cypriot ministers. We'd given Denktash the title of “leader of the Turkish Cypriot community.” We called on him in that capacity. We couldn't

call on the others because the only title that they had was “Minister of this” or “Minister of that.”

But we wanted to see them, particularly the one who styled himself Foreign Minister. The way we would do it was to go up to the Turkish side on the weekend or during the week. Cyprus is only a small island. You could drive from the Embassy in Nicosia to the beach house in Kyrenia or the beach house in, say, an hour and a half. You could have the Turkish Cypriots up there for lunch or dinner, you could spend the night or a weekend. They'd come and you could talk to them that way. So the beach house really served a useful purpose. I understand that we don't have it any more. I don't know why. I think that that's really too bad. The office was a leased property. It wasn't owned by the US. From time to time the owner acted as if he wanted to get it back. It's possible that he took it back at some point. I don't know whether we gave it up voluntarily. But if we gave it up voluntarily, it was a mistake, unless we replaced it with an equivalent.

So that was the Embassy, then. It was a good Embassy, I would say. We had some good American Foreign Service Officers there. It was a mix. Obviously, not everybody was as good as everybody else, but as things went, I would say that it was above average in its performance. I was fortunate enough to have a superb DCM there.

Q: Who was that?

BOEHM: Tom Carolan, a Middle East hand. His previous post had been Cairo. He had spent virtually his entire career in the Arab world. He was an Arabist who wanted a change, and I was lucky enough to get him. I didn't know him before. The personnel people gave me 10 names and said, “Look them over. If you don't like them, we'll give you more names.” I picked him on the basis of his paper record and never made a better choice in my life. He was superb.

Q: What was the political situation in Cyprus when you arrived there?

BOEHM: When I say “Cyprus,” you should take it to mean the Greek Cypriot government. When I want to include the Turks, I'll say so. When I talk about Embassy functions and contacts in Cyprus, I'll mean the only government that we recognized as such—the Greek Cypriots.

It's a mix of a parliamentary democracy and a presidential system. They have a President and they have a Parliament. To some degree the President has the same powers as an American President, but in this mixed system Parliament has a role which makes it somewhat different from our own system. The President was the leader of what you might call the conservative party. That wasn't its name, but basically it was a Right wing party. You had a couple of opposition parties, one of them led by the man who is best known outside of Cyprus, Glafkos Clerides. He had briefly been acting President when Archbishop Makarios had to flee the country, after the Greeks colonels moved in. Clerides was the principal opposition leader, and you had a couple of other parties as well.

They had elections while I was there. Then there was another election just after I left. Clerides had never been able to get himself elected. Although in the elections his party always got a plurality of votes, he couldn't get a majority, and you ended up with a parliamentary coalition, which would then elect somebody else. Clerides finally made it in the second election after I left Cyprus.

Q: But while you were there, he was not President.

BOEHM: He was not. It was always Kyprianou while I was there. Right after I left, an independent figure, George Vassiliou, who hadn't been a politician but had entered politics fairly late, was elected President. I had known him quite well in his capacity as a businessman. He had asked me, during that electoral campaign which took place shortly before I left Cyprus, what needed to be done to settle the Cyprus problem. I told him how it could be settled and also told him that both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders who reached such a settlement would be subject to the fate of classical Greeks and would be

banished immediately and never be able to return to Cyprus, because it would involve concessions that neither community would accept. If the people accepted the settlement, they'd punish the leaders who reached it. I told him that.

So this independent, George Vassiliou, was the next President. When he came up for reelection, Clerides was elected. That was about two years ago. Glafkos Clerides finally made it, after trying repeatedly. He was probably the most distinguished man in Greek Cyprus and the one who, in my experience, had the best understanding of the Cyprus problem. He understood very well what it would take to get a settlement. However, as we see, he has been politically unable to do it.

Q: Going back to that time, what do you think a settlement of the Cyprus would have involved and how could you reach it?

BOEHM: The question is what kind of concessions would be required from one side or the other. To achieve something that could be called a unified Cyprus, which was the object sought, it was clear to me that the Turkish Cypriots were going to have to give up territory. They then held—and still hold—something like 37% of the territory, but their population is considerably less than that in percentage terms. The Turkish Cypriots will have to give back territory and make some kind of settlement that will involve some kind of compensation to the Greek Cypriots for what they lost when they were driven out of northern Cyprus. And there will also have to be some compensation for Turkish Cypriots who were driven out of southern Cyprus. There would have to be some kind of nominal offset arrangement for these two groups.

The Greek Cypriots are going to have to give up the notion of majority rule of all of Cyprus. They are going to have to accept a large degree of autonomy in a Turkish part of Cyprus. This would be referred to as a federal solution, a kind of federation. But everybody was worried—the Greek Cypriots in particular—about whether this would really be a federation or not. They became involved in the semantics of the issue and said, “Well, are you sure

that it isn't a confederation?" They didn't want a confederation. That sounded too loose to them. They wanted a firmer arrangement. I would say to them, "Knock it off. Call it a federation and stop worrying about whether it's a federation or a confederation. It's a matter of what you get. So call it whatever makes it pleasing to you and then go for it." So that was it.

This was a problem that was not ready for a solution because the parties concerned were not ready for a solution. The Greek Cypriots were unwilling to accept the notion that a non-Greek, Turkish community, could actually occupy one part of the island and pretty much run it by itself. But those were the only terms on which the Turkish Cypriots would have accepted a settlement. So that was the situation.

Q: Did you have a feeling yourself and internally within the Embassy that this was it? In other words, during your time there, you would do what you could. If a break came, you would take advantage of it, but basically both sides had learned to live with the existing situation, and the United States had learned to live with it. The main thing was not to make it any worse. Was that your view and that of the Embassy?

BOEHM: I'm not sure that I would have thought of putting it that way, although I'm not prepared to say that that's a wrong description of our views. You always hoped that common sense might prevail, that reality would assert itself, and that the two sides would see the desirability of a settlement. From the Turkish Cypriot point of view—and I stressed this in my conversations with them, there would have been considerable putative economic benefits from a settlement. It would have enabled them to cooperate and live harmoniously with the Greek side.

There was a great disparity between the standards of living and the economies there. The Turkish side was struggling. It was poor and needed subsidies from Turkey to survive. The Greek side was booming and prosperous. One could see the Turkish side benefitting greatly in economic terms from a better relationship with the Greek side. So there was that

inducement. Of course, that consideration didn't weigh with the Greek Cypriots because economically they didn't need the Turkish part of Cyprus.

You always felt that there were various kinds of reality. The Greek Cypriots might come to understand that they couldn't run the whole territory as a Greek island and that they would have to acknowledge the fact that there was a Turkish community, that it then held more than one-third of the island, and that they would have to allow it to function with some degree of autonomy if they wanted to have a settlement. This might have involved a Greek President and a Turkish Vice-President and that kind of thing. But the Greeks weren't prepared to accept that.

They tended to take a long, long historic view of Cyprus, a quasi-religious or mystical view. The Greeks do this. You were a Consul General in Greece and you know that they tend to think in terms of Marathon and Thermopylae when they discuss current politics. When I talked to the Greek Ambassador in Cyprus, who had a sort of pro-consular role in Cyprus, before long you'd end up talking about Thermopylae and 3,000 years of history. The Greeks feel that they are the heirs of that history, and they continue to refer to it. Given that, reality didn't have a chance to break through that veneer of history, emotion, and religion.

One of the chief antagonists of any kind of negotiated settlement was Archbishop Makarios' successor, the Archbishop of Cyprus, who was a very, very hard liner—maybe the hardest liner of any prominent person in Cyprus. He took the view—and would say this to you if you referred to the Turkish Cypriot community in a discussion with him—that there isn't any Turkish Cypriot community. He would say that they are all basically Greeks who were forcibly converted [to Islam] and that there are no Turks in Cyprus.

Q: We used to get this, I understand, from the early Israeli governments—Golda Meir and others—who would say, “There are no Palestinians.”

BOEHM: I can't speak to that but I can tell you that as far as the Archbishop was concerned, there were no Turkish Cypriots.

Q: By the time you got to Cyprus did ordinary Greeks see any possibility that the status quo ante bellum could be reestablished. This would involve a mixed community of Turks coming back to southern Cyprus and Greeks going [to the northern part of Cyprus] and have a sort of spotted community around?

BOEHM: No. Nobody was talking about that. That was not an idea that was being discussed.

Q: What did you get from "His Excellency, Mr. Denktash"? How did you find him?

BOEHM: I enjoyed my encounters with him. He has a very sharp mind. He was, in every sense, worthy and impressive in conversation and was a great sparring partner. It was very hard to stump him in a discussion. One of the things that we were working on, of course, was confidence-building measures. When I first got to Cyprus, the UN Secretary General had just come out with a new proposal which involved an overall solution. The idea was that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. You discuss issues one by one, but if you reached a conclusion on one particular issue, it would not be considered settled until everything else was settled. It was hoped that this would enable the two sides to make a concession here because they expected to get one there. But if they didn't get a concession there, then the one that they had just made wouldn't count.

The question was whether that was the most likely way to succeed—an overall plan providing a final and overall settlement. Or should you start with some confidence building measures and then undertake what confidence-building measures are supposed to do if they work. Then you go on and try to solve other issues. I hadn't been there long when I concluded that confidence-building measures had the best prospects of success. I so informed Washington, but Washington, in effect, told me to sit down and shut up because

they were committed to the Secretary General's overall approach. Eventually, this didn't work.

These confidence-building measures were usually the same. They kept cropping up again and again. One of them had to do with a place called Varosha, a seaside resort and a southern suburb of Famagusta. Famagusta was on the very border of the Turkish occupied part of Cyprus. It was right there on the border between Turkish and Greek Cyprus, on the east coast of the island. Famagusta is a very famous old city, and Varosha was in the southern part of it. Since 1974, when the Turks moved into Cyprus, Varosha had been closed off by a fence. It had previously been totally Greek occupied. It had a series of high-rise apartments. Perhaps not all that high—maybe 10 to 12 stories. They were beach apartments occupied only by Greek Cypriots. There were no Turks in Varosha. After partition, it was a dead area. It was fenced off. Nobody was there, and nothing was being done. The buildings were beginning to crumble. The Greeks wanted to get back to Varosha. Since it was contiguous to Greek Cyprus, it would have been easy enough to do. Geographically speaking, the border lay between Varosha and downtown Famagusta. So Varosha was one of the confidence-building measures.

That would be something that the Turks would give, in return for the opening of the Nicosia airport, which was on the Green Line that divided Greek and Turkish Cyprus and was not being used at all. It could be opened up, and Turkish Cypriots could be given access to it. Perhaps trade could be reestablished in that area, and there could be other incentives of that kind.

These were confidence-building measures, and they're still being discussed. I don't have access any more to official cable traffic but I read in the newspapers recently, during the past month or so—that the Secretary General seemed to be on the brink of actually getting some of these confidence-building measures under way. Maybe it has happened.

Q: What sort of response were you getting from the Turks? Were they looking toward the United States?

BOEHM: Well, I think that basically they were looking to us not to press them too hard, to get off their back, as it were. We had an assistance program in Cyprus, about $15 million a year. It was a very odd, sui generis arrangement. It was divided up between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots on the basis of population, which meant, roughly, four parts for the Greeks to one part for the Turks. It was administered by the Cyprus Red Cross, the President of which was—and had been for many years—a Greek Cypriot, a very brilliant, woman lawyer. The Vice President [of the Cyprus Red Cross] continued to be—and had been for many years—a Turkish Cypriot doctor. The aid was sent through the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. This was a legal device which made it possible to have this strange arrangement. The UNHCR funneled the aid to the Cyprus Red Cross, which divided it between the Greeks and Turks on the basis of projects which were carried out.

We always hoped that we could use this aid to promote relations between Greek and Turkish Cyprus. The place to do that was Nicosia, because Nicosia was the capital of Greek Cyprus. It was also the capital of Turkish Cyprus. Northern Nicosia was where the Turks had set up their capital. And it's one city. So obviously you've got urban and municipal problems which cannot be separated. You've got sewer systems and sanitation problems. If an epidemic starts, it's going to cross borders. So there was a hopeful prospect of getting some cooperation. And in fact it worked that way. The sewer system was laid down. It crossed the border. It required coordination. The Greek and Turkish Cypriot mayors would get together and coordinate this service. So we tried, as I said, to use this money to do a little bit to help get cooperation between the two of them.I saw a possible project, a marvelous program. The bees of Cyprus—and Cyprus is agricultural—came down with some kind of disease. It was necessary to address this question of a bee disease—to research it and try to do something about it. Bees, like other creatures that fly, pay no attention to Green Lines or anything else like that. They fly back and forth. They

fertilize your orange grove and my orange grove. If they get sick and die, neither orange grove is going to continue. The bees came down with a bee disease. We thought that we could get some money to get some joint research going on to deal with this disease, but neither side would buy it. [Laughter] They didn't want it.The two communities weren't at all enthusiastic about these joint projects, which we were trying to press. We were looking for something which we could stick a label on and say, “This is a joint project.” The sewer system is fine. That worked.

Now that aid program was $15 million annually. It was hard to justify that amount of money, because Cyprus is not broke. It's not a poor country. It just barely qualified as a Third World country in terms of assistance. So while I was there, the State Department was asking Congress for $5 million for Cyprus. Congress always upped the figure to $15 million. As far as I know, they still do. This is the Greek Lobby in operation. All of this $15 million is marvelous for an ambassador to have available—$15 million in assistance to spread around. We'd have to approve the projects, or look at them and vet them. Basically, it was the Greeks and Turks that decided them. They came up with good projects. I must say that the money was well spent, but it really didn't achieve much of the purpose of getting them to work together. Then $5 million of the $15 million went for educational grants—can you imagine that?—to colleges and universities in the United States. $5 million for a total population of maybe 750,000 to 800,000 people. There weren't that many students. We had $5 million available. It originally amounted to $10 million. We gradually cut it down to $7.5 million, and it leveled off at $5 million—because we ran out of students to give the money to. We would have had to lower the standards to include people with a low IQ if we'd continued to put in that much money.

Your original question was, “What kind of handle did we have on the Turks?” or what leverage could we apply to the Turks? There was the fact that we treated them fairly well, in a legalistic sense. We didn't recognize the Turkish community as a state. The question would be, “How could they travel,” for example? We would put a visa on a piece of paper for them. We wouldn't stamp a visa in their Turkish Cypriot passports, but we'd give them

visas. We were giving them assistance. They were included in the scholarship program. They understood that. There were times when we had a distinguished visitor, a Senator or a Congressman. We would arrange a lunch with Mr. Denktash. He would decide to take that occasion to complain how the United States discriminated against the Turkish Cypriots, by which he meant not recognizing them as a state. Annoyed by that kind of comment, I'd say, “Wait a minute. Why don't you tell him about all the things we are doing for the Turkish Cypriots—the scholarships, the visas,” and so forth. And he would back off, because he knew that these things were of value.

Sometimes it turned out that you could really use this. It was fascinating.

Q: Could you talk a little bit about the Turkish side of the island and how it operated? Here were people who were considered to be closer to the soil, more a group of peasants, or maybe I'm wrong.

BOEHM: Well, you are wrong. The Turkish Cypriots, as you suggested a few minutes ago, were Cypriots, along with the Greek Cypriots. They lived in a unified Cyprus, up until 1963 or 1964. In 1967 a whole series of events occurred which tended to isolate them, but for hundreds of years they had lived, mixed in with the Greeks. Both the Greek and Turkish Cypriots were rather sophisticated. They tended to be educated—in general, better educated than people in either of the mother countries. The Cypriots were at a higher educational level, in general. There was a tradition of speaking English. Until the split came, they had gotten along very well, living near each other. Some of the older Turkish Cypriots would worry—even those who were adamantly opposed to making major concessions to the Greeks—that their kids didn't know Greek kids. There was no exchange. They were separated.

The older Turkish Cypriots felt that this situation, over the long term, was bad. They themselves had grown up with Greeks. They had gone to school with Greeks. Many of the officials on both sides had gone to law school in London. They knew each other from

their days in law school. Many of them had gone to Gray's Inn, which seemed to be the Mecca of Cyprus law students, whether Greek or Turkish. They had these old connections. Both Cypriot groups were, I would say, above the average level for other countries. They traveled a lot. They went to London and to the United States. They moved around. They were relatively sophisticated people.

The Turkish Cypriot economy was, as I said, in fairly bad shape. It was agrarian. Of course, there were semi-literate peasants on both sides, but more on the Turkish side. They grew primarily citrus fruit and garden vegetables, but the economy on the Turkish side was rather poor. The soil was being exhausted. There was a big problem related to the salinization of the orange groves. Morphou was the center of the orange country in northern Cyprus. The land was turning salty. Too much water was being taken out of the ground. So it was getting poorer. There was a little light industry, but not much. Then there were subsidies—grants from Turkey. These were budgetary subsidies. The economy of Turkish Cyprus functioned like the economy of virtually any country, in terms of how it worked, except for the subsidies.

I don't think that there was anything particularly remarkable about the Turkish Cypriot economy, except that the squeeze is now on, in terms of their ability to export. A lot of their foreign exchange came from exports to England. The British were under heavy pressure from the Greeks not to buy Turkish Cypriot products, which the Greek Cypriots regarded as stolen property, because a lot of it was produced on land which had been Greek and from which the Greeks had been driven out. Likewise, the tourist hotels in northern Cyprus had all been Greek owned before. The Greek Cypriots took the view that anybody who stayed in one of those hotels was purchasing stolen property. The British had been ignoring this, but just recently I read that, apparently, in the Council of Europe and in London as well, the Greeks seem to have made some headway here.

Q: The Greeks, being in the European Community, as opposed to the Turks, who are not in the European Community.

BOEHM: That's right, but I'm talking now about the Council of Europe which, of course, includes more than the European Community. If the Turkish Cypriots are unable to export, they're going to have a problem, because a good deal of their income came from selling to the British. If that market, in fact, has been cut off, this will be another problem for the Turkish Cypriots. So a lot depends on the willingness of Turkey to continue to subsidize Turkish Cyprus and keep it up to snuff. Otherwise, the Turkish Cypriots are going to be in serious economic trouble.

Q: I went to a recent meeting of Greek Cypriots in the US on 25 Years of Tyranny in Cyprus. It was a very emotional meeting. One of the issues that they mentioned was that the Turks were putting a lot of colonists in Cyprus. Let's talk about the time that you were there, 1984 to 1987.

BOEHM: You couldn't get confirmation of the numbers. The Greek Cypriots tended to exaggerate the number of Turkish settlers—you can call them colonists. They were mainland Turkish settlers. The Turkish Cypriots and Turkey tended to downplay the numbers, so that you would say that the number was somewhere between the lowest figure given by the Turkish side and the high claim on the Greek side. In any case, the number was considerable, because if you start with a population of 120,000 to 140,000 Turkish Cypriots and you add anywhere from 30,000 to 60,000 mainland Turkish settlers, depending on whose estimate you were using, that represents a pretty sizeable proportion. This was always a source of great concern on the Greek side, because they saw that northern Cyprus was becoming more and more “Turkified” and more and more “Turkish mainlandized”—and more and more Greek properties were under threat from the Turks coming into Cyprus. But I could never get a good figure on that. We made the best estimate that we could, which was a rough stab at it. The Turks, as I said, tended to minimize this. At least some of these people were Turkish soldiers, who had served in Cyprus. The Turks still have quite a few troops there, and they rotate them. However, as has been the case historically with many countries, when a man's term of service was up,

if he wanted to stay there, he'd be given a plot of land and an allowance to help him get started. Then he could bring his family or marry a local girl, and stay. So some of these settlers—I don't know whether it was a lot or only a few—were Turkish soldiers. We don't have any accurate figures on them because the Turks don't want to give accurate figures. They'd be better off if they did, because it would tend to minimize the exaggerated claims of the Greek side. Quite a few of the Turkish settlers were in that category—mustered out soldiers who chose to stay on in Cyprus.

Q: What was happening? Were you monitoring the situation to see whether the Turks were settling in for a long stay? The Turks had almost 40% of the island.

BOEHM: One of our objectives was to get the Turks to keep cutting down on the number of their troops. You couldn't ask them to pull them all out, right away, because they'd laugh at you if you did. First of all, in terms of numbers, there was a problem finding out just how many Turkish troops there were in Cyprus. We would estimate, say, 28,000. There was a Turkish Ambassador on the Turkish side. He would say, “Oh, no, it's nowhere near that.” We'd say, “Well, what do you need all of these people for? Nobody's threatening them, militarily, so why not cut this force down? If it's 28,000 or whatever it is, why not cut it down to 15,000 or 18,000? That should be enough for any imaginable purpose.” The Turks would draw the force down a little bit, and then there would be a political scare, and they would build the force back up again. There, again, it was hard to get reliable figures. We talked to the Turks about it and tried to get them to hold their forces down.

Q: Was the land in the northern part of the island, which had been Greek, taken over and used or settled?

BOEHM: Some of it was and some of it wasn't. It was never entirely clear to me just how much property in northern Cyprus had been Greek owned which was then included in Turkish Cyprus. How much was actually being used and how much was just sealed off and left fallow? You saw lots of buildings in Turkish Cyprus which were half or three-quarters

finished, including houses that had been under construction in 1974. They had been left just standing there. Nothing had been done to them. They were just there. Those were indications that the Turkish Cypriots were not actively exploiting Greek property. On the other hand you had things like the hotel up in Kyrenia, a Greek owned hotel which had been pressed into service by the Turks. They were using it as a tourist hotel. The Greeks took a very stern view of this and said, “If you use that, you're buying stolen property.” Some property undoubtedly was being used by the Turks.

Q: From what you're saying I gather that it wasn't too easy for you or your officers to go around and see what has happened to this or that property. You weren't trying to get any estimate or getting names and locations of property from Greeks and finding out what had happened to them.

BOEHM: We did, but this was done on an informal basis. We were not asked by the Greek Cypriot government to do anything about that kind of property. Churches were something else. But a Greek Cypriot friend who knew that we went to northern Cyprus or went to Kyrenia, where he had a house, might say, “The next time you're in Kyrenia, would you mind taking a look at my house? I'd like to know how it's doing.” He'd give you the address and a description of how to recognize the house—for example, it was overlooking the port of Kyrenia. We'd look at it and tell him that it looks all right. [Laughter] Yes, you did get informal requests of that kind. However, the Government of Cyprus didn't ask about that kind of thing.

There was a special problem with churches. Cyprus, like every Greek place, is covered with churches. There were some beautiful old Greek Orthodox churches in northern Cyprus. Some of them had very valuable, even priceless mosaics or frescoes. The Greeks were very much worried that some of these things were disappearing. They thought that they were being smuggled out and sold to museums, along with icons and statuary. That was a matter of official concern. Again, the Greeks really didn't ask us to do anything about it. They concentrated on making sure that the world knew that these acts of vandalism

and these rip-offs were going on, as they described it. Secondly, nobody could buy these works of art. There was a famous case of an American woman who bought some Greek Cypriot religious object which had been on the Turkish side. She had to give it back and lost $2 million in the process.

Q: Did you and your officers ever make an effort to go around to these churches as sightseers but at the same time show that these were not abandoned places, or anything like that?

BOEHM: Yes, of course. All of us went from time to time—sometimes fairly often—to northern Cyprus on weekends or holidays. Actually, I didn't specifically send people out to make a survey of Greek Orthodox churches in Turkish Cyprus. However, people from the Embassy would go out on the weekends to visit them. Many of them were well worth visiting. When they came back, they would report on what they had seen—whether the church and its frescoes were falling apart, whether it was being maintained, or that kind of thing. So we had a kind of feel for how these things were.

Q: I was wondering whether the American presence—and the presence of the British and other Western representatives—made some kind of impact on the activities of the Turks.

BOEHM: That is a matter for speculation. What would the Turks have done if nobody had been looking? Turkey itself might be an example of how the Turkish Cypriots would act. Turkey sees not only the cultural but also the economic value of the antiquities with which it is loaded to the point of almost sinking into the sea, in terms of tourism. The Turkish Cypriots are no less sophisticated in that regard. I think that they would preserve what is valuable. Probably, they wouldn't pay too much attention to the Greek Orthodox churches, but at the same time I think that they would recognize that there was a potential value there. At least, they would recognize that they shouldn't actively destroy these works of religious art.

Q: You did not have something equivalent to what, at other times, Islamic fundamentalists did—going around and...

BOEHM: Not at the time that I was in Cyprus. At an earlier period, probably at the time of the 1974 invasion of Cyprus, if I may use that word, headstones in Greek cemeteries in northern Cyprus were knocked over, curiously enough. There was a Greek cemetery near Kyrenia. Contiguous to it and behind it was a British cemetery. You would go up through the Greek cemetery through a gate—which was always open—to the British cemetery. Most of the headstones in the Greek cemetery had been knocked over or broken. This was probably done at the time that the Turks came into northern Cyprus in 1974—perhaps by Turkish military people. At the time I was in Cyprus, this wasn't going on.

Then, of course, there were some magnificent, classical Greek remains up there in northern Cyprus which we would visit. They were maintained, as I say, as tourist attractions. Probably, the Greek Cypriots would disagree with what I am saying and would make charges against the Turkish Cypriots. However, my impression is that they were not actively destroying or damaging these things. On the other hand, and to the contrary, to the extent that these things were potentially valuable from the touristic point of view, they were more or less maintained. The Turkish Cypriots had very limited resources, so they couldn't do very much.

Q: What about the problem of the five missing Americans? We're still talking about missing Americans from the Korean War. This has been a major political issue in connection with the Vietnam situation.

BOEHM: It's still there. The most famous case was that of a young man named Andrew Kasapis. It was a very sad case. Kasapis was a young American kid, born in the United States. His parents had come from Cyprus, but they were also American citizens. He was a college student. In the summer of 1974 he had gone to Cyprus to visit relatives —sort of finding his roots. He just had the bad luck to be there when the Turkish troops

came sweeping in. He was reportedly taken away by Turkish soldiers, subsequently disappeared, and was never seen again. The question is, “What happened to Andrew Kasapis?” That was 20 years ago. There was one report from another Greek Cypriot who had been taken to Turkey at that time and put in jail there. Eventually, he was released. He claimed to have heard, while in jail, from an adjacent cell, somebody shouting, “My name is Andrew Kasapis. Tell people I'm here.” When you read the full documentation available, it's hard to see how he could have been sure what he heard. But you had this claim. Other circumstantial evidence suggested that Andrew Kasapis had been killed, that he was dead and had been buried in some unmarked grave. A lot of people were killed at that time—both Greeks and Turks. Sometimes, they were buried in mass graves.

But this was a live issue. Mr. Kasapis [Andrew's father] is determined to pursue this matter. Understandably, he continues to hope that his son may be alive and that the Turks are still holding him. However, he believes that with the passage of time the Turks are afraid to release him, because of the opprobrium they would incur if they did. It's a tragic situation. Mr. Kasapis has a lot of support in this from the Greek Lobby and from Greek organizations, the most significant of which is called AHEPA—the American Hellenic Educational something or other.

Q: Probably Protective Association.

BOEHM: AHEPA is a powerful interest group.

Q: Philanthropic, I think.

BOEHM: Philanthropic—that's right. So this case remains alive. I did discuss it several times with the Turkish Cypriots and with Denktash, asking them to make another effort to find out what happened. I said, “There must be people around who would know something about this.” The Turkish Cypriots, of course, didn't like to talk about this case. Their response to this kind of representation would be, “Yes, there are 2,500 missing Greek Cypriots, including your Americans. What about the 1,600 missing Turkish Cypriots?

Nobody ever talks about that. So don't bother us about it, unless you're prepared to show equal concern for the missing Turkish Cypriots." So it was hard to engage them on this subject. They didn't want to talk about it. I would insist on Denktash's discussing it and urge him to try to resolve this case. He finally agreed that he would. The Turkish Cypriots then located a couple of former soldiers whose units had been in that area. They were prepared to say that they had seen Andrew Kasapis being taken off by other soldiers. They said, as I recall, that they had heard some shots, and the other soldiers returned without Andrew. This would be circumstantial evidence, that Andrew had been killed by persons no longer traceable.

That's the way I recall it, Stuart. I want to say right now, for the record, that when I am discussing specific incidents of this kind which happened some time ago, I have no documentation with me, and I could be getting some of my facts a little bit wrong. I want to make that clear that on this, and other occasions as well, I wouldn't want to be pinned down to making misstatements. I might not have this absolutely correct. But that's the general tenor of my recollections.

Q: Were you offering to send in graves registration people and all of that?

BOEHM: I think that either we did or somebody offered to send in special investigators. I don't recall that. If we did make that proposal, I don't think that the Turkish Cypriots agreed to it. Anyhow, Denktash did as much as he could to try to get this case off the table, but it is not off the table. Only a few weeks ago I saw the name of Andrew Kasapis again. His father is still...

Q: It was mentioned by a Greek-American member of Congress from Florida.

BOEHM: That's right. That's what it was.

Q: What was your view and what were you getting from [the American Embassy in] Athens? The Greeks started this whole process. I was in Athens at the time in 1974.

Before that, the Greeks were sending troops in and messing around. Let's stick to the time you were in Cyprus, 1984-1987. How did you view what the Greeks on the mainland were doing? Andreas Papandreou was...

BOEHM: Andreas came into office during my tour in Cyprus. We lived through the Greek election campaign when Andreas was elected and became Prime Minister. Everybody was wondering how this was going to play in Cyprus. Certainly, in terms of his public presentation, Andreas was even more militant than his predecessors. He visited Cyprus. It was the first time that a Greek Prime Minister had visited Cyprus for a long, long time. He came over to Cyprus. He never talked about Enosis, of course, but it was very clear that as far as he was concerned, Pan-Hellenism was his bag. When he looked around the Mediterranean and the Aegean, all he could see was Greece, Greek civilization, and the Greek Orthodox religion. So Cyprus, in his view, was part of a vast, Pan-Hellenic civilization. As I recall it, he never mentioned this in a political sense. He didn't talk about Enosis, which would have been a political union between Cyprus and Greece. But people probably thought that, in the back of his mind, he wouldn't mind Enosis, if an opportunity came up to achieve it. [Laughter]

His election was kind of a setback for hopes that there might be some solution to this, but the atmospherics weren't right for it. Andreas Papandreou was spoiling for a fight with the Turks. He didn't want good relations with Turkey. He wanted bad relations with Turkey, and Cyprus was part of that whole conflict. He was interested in other things: air space, the islands, the continental shelf, and the whole bag of difficulties between Greece and Turkey. This was fine with Papandreou. He wanted to lean on the Turks.

Q: Was this just talk? I'm not talking about the Greek Cypriots but the mainland Greeks. They were putting officers into Cyprus. Was there any of this kind of messing around?

BOEHM: Yes, they were there. The Cypriot armed forces were under Greek control—I mean, under the control of Greeks from the mainland. There was a mainland Greek

general in Cyprus. Then there was a small contingent—actually Greek, not Greek Cypriot. Just as there was a Turkish contingent, provided for under the London and Paris agreements under which Cyprus gained its independence from the British. So the mainland Greeks were very much involved, and I use the term “Pro-Consul” advisedly in talking about the Greek Ambassador in Nicosia. The Greek Ambassador in Nicosia had a status that was quite different from the rest of us ambassadors. He was consulted, and his views were regarded with great seriousness, when it came to how the Greek Cypriots were going to play this or that foreign policy issue. He didn't meddle too much in Greek Cypriot internal affairs, but he was expected to appear on patriotic occasions. He would be received as a powerful personage, like the Emperor Constantine.

Q: How about on foreign policy? Did you find yourself going around with a shopping list before every UN General Assembly session? How did you find them?

BOEHM: Yes, of course we did that, as every other American Embassy did. We received the same instructions that every other Embassy received, with a list of what were considered to be the important issues. We'd go over these with the Greek Cypriots. I should have mentioned—I didn't mean to avoid this question, but you asked me about our interests in Cyprus. I neglected to mention the location of Cyprus near Lebanon and Israel.

We don't have any military bases in Cyprus. The British still have what are called Sovereign Base Areas in two locations in Cyprus. They belong to the British. This is legally British sovereign territory, under the agreements that gave Cyprus its independence.

Q: Like Guantanamo Bay.

BOEHM: Except that it's not held under a 99-year lease. These are permanent British base areas—as long as it lasts. Some day the British will probably give them up. But they've got these two areas now. It's sovereign British territory, not leased, as Guantanamo Bay is. From time to time we've been able to use those British bases for purposes with which the British have agreed, involving the movement of U. S. military personnel. And,

of course, we've been able to use Cyprus' own civilian airport, when Lebanon got to be a big problem and when our Embassy in Lebanon was living under a state of siege and didn't have access to Beirut International Airport. When we had to support the Embassy in Beirut by helicopter from outside, Cyprus was the place from which we did it. We used the Cyprus commercial airport. We didn't use the British bases for this purpose. So that took negotiations with the Greek Cypriots. And they were very cooperative. We found that when such emergencies come along and you had something that had to be done quickly—staging military or other aircraft through Nicosia—the Cypriot government would cooperate very well and very promptly. They would respond quickly.

Q: How did the Cypriot Government behave on UN votes? Where did Cyprus stand?

BOEHM: Cyprus tended to view UN votes as it did everything else: in terms of the Cyprus problem and whether the countries involved which had an interest in this issue or that issue would support Cyprus. Cyprus is a member of the [British] Commonwealth, like other former British colonies and dominions. When Cyprus came up on the Commonwealth agenda—and it is always on the agenda at all of these international meetings—Cyprus tended to swap its votes on “your” issue if you vote for Cyprus on “our” issue. There were plenty of issues on which we and the Cypriots did not agree. Where there was no such involvement, the Cypriots tended to vote like most civilized Western countries.

Q: What about the Soviets? This was still several years before the sudden fall of the Soviet empire. Cyprus was an important area as a way to get between two allies, Greece and Turkey on the flank of NATO. What were the Soviets doing in Cyprus?

BOEHM: They had an embassy there, and it was one of the larger missions—not huge, but fairly large. When I arrived in Cyprus, the Soviet ambassador had been there for 12 years. He was Dean of the Diplomatic Corps. He was an old-fashioned type of Soviet ambassador. He didn't speak Greek or English or Turkish. He wasn't out and around. He wasn't a bustling type of ambassador. He had been there forever, as I said. He was

perfectly amiable. He would smile, but not very much. He was a very stern and withdrawn type.

We were witnessing a strange change about this time. All of a sudden, all of those old-style Soviet ambassadors disappeared and were replaced by these young, bright, English-speaking people. That happened in Cyprus. This old ambassador disappeared, and in came a new guy, who was about 35 years old. He was very bright, amiable, and fun to be with. He used to go to all of the parties. He spoke excellent English. He chatted people up. A total revolution.

The Russians looked at Cyprus as a soft spot in NATO. This was fine with them, but they weren't doing much. There was a Cypriot Communist Party. The Soviets would help the Communist Party, but this never became a serious threat.

Q: Speaking of the Communist Party, the Cypriot Communists at one point were considered one of the more dangerous groups around. I'm talking about shooting people and so forth. One of our Ambassadors to Cyprus, Rodger Davies, was assassinated. How did you feel about the situation by the time you got there?

BOEHM: Well, there was a great preoccupation with security.

Q: It was Cypriot policemen, wasn't it?

BOEHM: I don't know whether they were policemen, but it was said to be known who they were. For one reason or another—and I'm not sure what the reason is—they've never been brought to justice. Right after Rodger Davies was shot—and he'd only been in Cyprus for about a month, poor Rodger—another ambassador was temporarily sent in, and then he was replaced. The Government of Cyprus, partly in an effort to atone for what had been done, assigned six Cyprus cops as bodyguards for the American Ambassador. When I arrived there 10 years later, they were still assigned there—all six of them, and

they were the same guys. They had been doing this for 10 years. They were marvelous guys. I got to know them very well, because they were with me for three years.

Q: All the time? Even when you went into Turkish territory?

BOEHM: No, they couldn't go there. Sometimes I'd go up to Turkish Cyprus to be by himself. Luckily, they were fine men, very amiable and efficient. They tried not to be too obtrusive, but, like any group of six people, they had different personalities. Some of them were more obtrusive than others. I had them, and there was an obsession with security. But by the time I got to Cyprus the threat was not from the Cypriot communists or any other Cypriots. It was from Arab terrorists. There were Lebanese and other terrorists running around and shooting each other, and it was a question of how much protection I needed.

I found this very heavy security somewhat oppressive. I had been there three months when I concluded that maybe we did not need all these bodyguards. So one day I was at the airport, seeing off President Kyprianou, who was going off to New York for one of his periodic trips for a meeting with the UN Secretary General. The chief of police was also present. He said, “How are things going?” I said, “Fine. By the way, I've been wondering whether I really need all this security.” His eyes lit up. It was costing him six cops, you see, and it had been going on for 10 years. He said, “Really?” He almost began to drool at the prospect of getting his cops back. So I began to think that maybe I had been a little hasty. I said that I had been thinking about this. I said that if I decided to take the matter further, I would get back to him.

Well, I was really thinking about it. Before I could do anything about it—I would probably have had to get Washington's agreement—there was a terrorist incident. Somebody was shot three blocks away from the Embassy. I knew then that the game was up and I dropped the idea. So I had these six cops throughout my stay there. I got to know them very, very well.

Q: Did you get involved at all in the Lebanese hostage business, since you were close at hand?

BOEHM: Yes, we were very much involved in the support operation, which was conducted out of Embassy Nicosia. Everything was moved through Cyprus. If, for example, the American Ambassador in Beirut wanted to leave Lebanon, he would be helicoptered over to Cyprus. I would have him come up and spend the night at my residence. Then he would go on his way the next day by commercial flight. Supplies and everything for the Embassy in Beirut went through Cyprus. So we had a Beirut support operation in Cyprus. We had to get additional people, some of whom, at least, were on the payroll of Embassy Beirut, which would have to pay to conduct this support operation. This involved primarily airplanes and coordination with the US Air Force, plus the Government of Cyprus and Nicosia airport.

Q: Did you have a command post set up or anything like that?

BOEHM: We had people who spent their day down at the airport. One more thought on this subject. The question was, “Who's running things here, anyway?” Naturally, the US military—in this case EUCOM, the European Command, which was carrying out this Beirut support operation and, occasionally, other, ad hoc operations—wanted to have its own communications with the people down at the airport. I said, “No, everything has to go through and be controlled by the Embassy. You communicate with us, and we'll communicate with the airport.” We had a big struggle over this.

I was making a trip to Europe anyway and I went to Stuttgart and called on the “DCINC,” as he is known—the Deputy Commander in Chief of the European Command, who actually commands the operation, because the Commander is also the NATO commander and spends his time doing that in Belgium. The DCINC actually commanded EUCOM, and he happened to be a National War College classmate of mine—Dick Lawson, an Air Force

four-star general. I went to Stuttgart while in Europe and went to see him. I spent the night at his house, and we argued this thing out.

He wanted to have his own communications. I explained why I didn't want him to have that. He finally agreed to do it the way I wanted to do it, reserving the right to reopen the question if it didn't work to his satisfaction.

Q: What was the issue?

BOEHM: The issue was whether or not the military command in Germany could communicate directly with the military people at the airport in Cyprus or whether they would communicate with the Embassy, and we would do the rest. I felt that it was essential to keep control over these operations. I didn't want people coming in and free lancing. That's been my consistent view everywhere.

Q: And it happens. You can get by for a while, and all of a sudden, something happens.

BOEHM: You're in a foreign country, and we [in the Embassy] know how to get things done in the way which will make it possible for us to continue to operate. I've seen this happen repeatedly, because I had a lot of political-military experience. If you let the military decide themselves how and when to do things, they wind up shooting themselves in the foot in a foreign country. They don't take sufficient account of the need to respect the sovereignty of a country and to arrange things in a certain way so that the foreign country continues to find their presence acceptable. An Embassy knows how to do that. Our military—through no fault of their own because, after all, that's not what they're trained for—often don't know how to do it. It's a matter of getting the job done.

Q: It's not a matter of ego or prestige.

BOEHM: No. It's a matter, it seems to me, of asserting the proper role of the Department of State in dealing with foreign governments. Those were the principles and practical aspects of what I was trying to do.

Q: You left Cyprus in 1987. What did you do next?

BOEHM: When the time came for me to leave Cyprus, I was asked by the Department what I wanted to do next. I said that I'd like to have another embassy. They said, “Well, you can't have one right now—maybe in a year. What would you like to do for a year, pending a possible embassy?” I said, “Well, I'd like to do something that I haven't done before.” This was an exchange with George Vest, who was then Director General of the Foreign Service. George, of course, was a very cultivated man. His style was beautiful and witty. George said, “Well, it's going to be a choice between the Elysian Fields and the Augean Stables.” From then on he would slug his messages “Elysian Fields,” and I would slug mine, the “Augean Stables.” He came back and said, “Well, look, I know that you said that you don't want to do anything that you've done before, but you've done everything. You've been on the Board of Examiners, you've been an inspector, and a diplomat in residence. Would you consider, even though you've done it before, the position of diplomat in residence at Howard University in Washington?” That was fine. I replied, “This is the only position of diplomat in residence that I would consider, and, yes, I would accept it.” So I spent the year 1987 to 1988 as diplomat in residence at Howard.

Q: I think it's always interesting to pick these things up because you're the outsider going to a university. Howard is the preeminent African-American or black...

BOEHM: Traditionally black and the most prestigious...

Q: I have a couple of questions. How did you find the administration of Howard University? What was your impression of it?

BOEHM: First of all, as you know, I had been a diplomat in residence...

Q: At Hamilton College.

BOEHM: I found that the position of diplomat in residence at Howard University had many similarities to that at Hamilton College, in the sense that the faculty was suspicious of you. They thought that you were probably looking for a permanent job. [Laughter] The university administration wanted to have a senior diplomat to adorn the faculty for a year but wasn't quite sure what to do with him. Howard, of course, is much larger than Hamilton. As a result, I would have to say that it was less organized. As Hamilton was fairly small, it was pretty well organized. Howard was like any larger organization—it was less well organized.

My main purpose in going there had been to recruit students to take the Foreign Service Examination and enter the Foreign Service. A lot of emphasis was being placed then—as now—on getting into the Foreign Service groups who were considered to be under represented. So I regarded that as my principal mission at Howard. That mission was a failure. I did not succeed in doing any significant recruiting and I didn't get much cooperation from the administration of the university, either. They had a placement official—I forget what his title was. He was a man whose job was to place graduating students. I thought that he was somebody who should be interested in this, but all I got out of him was a statement that he had the booklet on the Foreign Service in his desk drawer and that he knew about the Foreign Service. But he didn't really organize any groups of students for me to talk to and try to explain what the Foreign Service was. So I had to do this in classes, where I would go and lecture. I would include in my lecture some discussion of the Foreign Service as a career. But I didn't produce any results.

I've often wondered why. There were plenty of bright people there. I think that the reasons, in my view, were basically economic. That is, the Foreign Service simply isn't competitive in what it can pay to the brightest black students at the beginning of their careers. I think

that the economic pressures on black students, on the average, are greater than on comparable white students. Maybe they have to support a few people and they can't afford the luxury of starting in a low-paying job. I think that that's one reason, and an important reason at that. I'm sure that there are other reasons as well, but that was one of the things that struck me about this problem of recruiting people from minority groups. Certainly, that effort was a flop in terms of the mission I had given myself. This mission had been warmly endorsed by, I think it was, John Whitehead, then the Deputy Secretary of State at that time. I had called on him before I reported in to Howard University. He urged me to follow that course and to report back to him. I did report back to him at the end of that year and had to report my failure. [Laughter] He took it philosophically. But everybody knew what the problem was.

Q: How did you find interest in foreign affairs at Howard?

BOEHM: It was limited. I dealt with students in various courses. I didn't teach a course. I lectured around in other people's courses. Before I go further with that, I would say that there wasn't that much receptivity among the faculty and the appropriate departments: the history and government departments in particular. I didn't see any great readiness to make use of this resource that was there on campus. So I had to go over and pound the table and say, “Damn it, I want to lecture in your class.” Once I got into the classroom, the students were interested and receptive, but foreign affairs was not a burning issue at Howard. I would say that there were other interests which far outweighed any interest in foreign affairs. And mostly for professional reasons. These were students who had to get out there and make a living—get a profession which would provide a decent living. This is not to suggest that all of the students came from impoverished backgrounds. They didn't. There were plenty of middle class kids there, too. However, by and large, the interest was in getting ahead in a career that you understood and that you could make some money in. So it was business administration, medicine, and communications. These were the big areas of interest.

Q: Pre-law, too.

BOEHM: And then law. Right. At one time I had been Deputy Chief of Mission to Patricia Roberts Harris. Subsequent to her tenure as Ambassador to Luxembourg, she became Dean of the Law School at Howard University. Hers was a well known name on the campus. She was dead by the time I got to Howard, but her name was still big there. Indeed, they were getting ready to start a program or school named for Pat Harris—in foreign affairs, as I recall. I worked with the man who was going to set that up. He was himself a retired ambassador.

Those subjects were what the kids were interested in, and foreign affairs was really a sideshow.

There were a number of foreign students there—most of them black and many of them from Africa or the West Indies. In fact, the chairman of the history department himself was a West Indian. There were a number of non-Americans on the faculty. I would say that the African students and most of the foreign students had more interest in foreign affairs than the American students.

Q: You left Howard after a year. You were at Howard from 1987 to 1988. Then what happened?

BOEHM: Well, just before I left Howard, the Department said that it would nominate me to be Ambassador to Oman. I am a pretty straightforward person who respects the Foreign Service for its professionalism. I said, “I'm honored that you want me to be your nominee, but surely you have some very bright young Arabists around who would serve the purpose as well. I'm not an Arabist. I hope that I'm bright, but why me?” They said, “Well, you have some qualifications that are needed at this time.” I should say that the Iran-Iraq War was on at the time. I knew what they meant. They wanted a political-military person who knew how to deal with the US military and could act as a go-between, working between the US

military and foreign governments. I had had some experience in that respect, which most of our Arabists had not had. So they said that there are reasons, without spelling them out. I knew what they meant. I said, “All right. I'll be your nominee.”

This nomination had to go to the White House first, and a very long process was set in motion, because it was an election year [1988], the Senate was being recalcitrant about hearings and all of that, and the matter dragged on. It took three months to get the agreement out of the Omanis because all of these things had to be approved by the Sultan himself. The Sultan had taken off on his yacht somewhere, and they didn't want to bring unnecessary business to him. He wasn't considering agr#ments at that point, so it took three months to get it. By that time we were in September, with the elections coming up in November. Congress was getting ready to do its election thing, which we all understand. So the nomination didn't reach the Senate before it adjourned prior to the elections. I was getting rather fed up at that point. I spent six or eight weeks studying Arabic and filling in my time until this appointment was ready. It didn't come along, and Congress went home. I was getting ready to hang it up. I was almost at the compulsory retirement age, as I was 62 at the time. I thought that perhaps I should just retire.

Then the Department called me and said, “The President is going to make a few recess appointments. You're going to be one of them, if you accept.” I said OK. I thought, “In for a penny, in for a pound.” Indeed, on December 1, 1988, after the elections in which George Bush was elected, President Reagan made three or four recess appointments, including me. So then the question, of course, was to go to Oman. My predecessor...

Q: Cranwell Montgomery.

BOEHM: He didn't leave. I told the Department that time was going by. They said, “Oh, he's going to leave.” But he didn't leave. He came back to Washington and then went back to Oman.

So January, 1989, came, and he was still there in Oman. At that stage I was thinking, I have credentials signed Ronald Reagan. By the time I get to Oman and present my credentials to the Sultan, Ronald Reagan isn't going to be the President. I thought that I should not present credentials signed by someone who is not the President of the United States. And I'm not sure that the Omanis would accept them if I did. So I said that I was not going to go. I would stay here and wait. If President Bush chooses to reappoint me and give me credentials signed “Bush,” I would go to Oman.

Well, in due course, on January 20, 1989, President Bush was inaugurated. His first order of business was not the appointment of an Ambassador to Oman. [Laughter] It was John Tower as Secretary of Defense. So it took him a while to get around to this matter. Eventually, President Bush decided that he would appoint me. It took a long time. It was October, 1989, when I finally went to Oman.

Q: What do you do in this sort of situation?

BOEHM: You do whatever you can. I was too far advanced in my career and too long in the tooth to do busy work. So I'd drop by the Department, read the cables, try to keep in touch with what was going on, and visit people who had some knowledge of Oman. I made many calls here and there on various people, but this was just spinning your wheels. As I say, I was really discouraged and was tempted, many times, just to chuck it and resign. But then I thought that I had gotten this far. I might as well sweat it out, which I did.

Of course, the ironic part of it was that the reason for which they wanted me to go to Oman, my political-military background in the context of the Iran-Iraq War, had disappeared. The Iran-Iraq War had ended. [Laughter] By the time I got to Oman there wasn't any war. So I was wondering what I was going to do for the three or four years I would be there. Being in a new place is always interesting, but in terms of the job itself I could see nothing there which would have engaged me for several years. But then along came the Iraqi attack on Kuwait.

Q: Was this while you were still in Washington?

BOEHM: No. I went to Oman, as I said.

Q: You got to Oman in October, 1989?

BOEHM: I presented my credentials in October, 1989. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait began in the following summer.

Q: Before we get to that, because it raises a whole new situation, what was the situation in Oman when you arrived?

BOEHM: The situation in Oman was not without its interesting and useful aspects. Roughly 10 years earlier the United States had concluded what was referred to as an Access Agreement with Oman which gave the United States Air Force access to Omani military airports and air bases under various contingencies. There were ongoing contacts with the Government of Oman about how we would use these facilities. And as is usually the case, the Government of Oman wanted to hold on as tightly as it could, not only to its sovereignty, but all the trappings and appurtenances of sovereignty, controlling everything we did. The US Air Force, of course, wanted operational flexibility, which is perfectly understandable. These are matters you find everywhere abroad where you have US military and other kinds of bases. There is always a kind of quiet struggle between the host government and the US as to who's in charge here. So there was that kind of thing going on, to be dealt with.

From the professional point of view, shortly after I arrived, a border crisis with Yemen broke out...

Q: At that time Yemen was two countries, and this was the Marxist...

BOEHM: Marxist South Yemen, whose territory extended over to the Omani border.

Yemen, after all, had an enormous population for that part of the world—between eight and 10 million people. Oman had a population of about 1.5 million. Yemen was poor, Oman had oil, and some of the oil was down there in the border area. So anything around the border [with Yemen] was sensitive. The border had always been disputed, like many borders in that part of the world. It had been drawn by a British survey team many years earlier. So it was a delicate issue. The Omanis were telling me that the Yemenis were violating the border. They were allegedly attacking some border police posts. The Omanis wanted our support.

At that time we were discussing various aspects of our relations with South Yemen at the UN in New York with a view toward their improvement. This was something that the South Yemenis very much wanted. I saw a possibility there of getting our Ambassador to the UN to let them know that if they were going to threaten our friends in the vicinity, there wouldn't be very much of a prospect of improving our relations with them. By chance we also had a military exercise coming up at that time in Oman, near the border with South Yemen. I was afraid that somebody in Washington might get the idea of postponing or stalling that exercise to avoid getting involved in any conflict. I said that that would be the worst thing the US could do. We have a lot at stake here. Let's go ahead with the exercise. And there were other things that we could do.

We did all of those things, and the Yemeni then backed off. That was good for me, because I was able to move into the situation and be of assistance—to get Washington to be supportive of the Omanis. So this gave me some stature in Oman. Eventually, Oman and Yemen signed a border agreement which legally settled the border.

Q: You also were drawing on your political-military experience, knowing not only what the normal problems are but also how Washington operated as far as exercises were concerned: what might happen and to anticipate...

BOEHM: What might be too difficult for Washington to do. So I was able to make suggestions not only to Washington but to the Omanis as well—to avoid asking Washington to do things that they couldn't do. Yes. Political-military experience was helpful. So the Department turned out to have been right in making somebody available [as Ambassador] with political-military experience to go to Oman.

Anyway, that launched me well. All of that happened before I had even presented my credentials to the Sultan.

Q: In connection with the period before the Gulf War, which, of course, was the beginning of a real crisis, could you talk about how you dealt with the government of Oman?

BOEHM: Well, it was very interesting. It was the first autocratic government which I had had to deal with as an ambassador. Cyprus, of course, has an elected, democratic government. Oman does not. It is a one-man show. It's an absolute monarchy. It was fascinating to me to try to come to grips with it and figure out how to deal with this absolute monarchy in which only the Sultan basically has the power of decision on any important matters. There is a whole array of ministers.

Q: You were saying that Oman had a whole array of ministers.

BOEHM: It has all of the trappings of a government, including ministers, ministries, departments, and so forth. They conduct the day to day business. However, no one is willing to make a significant decision without being sure that the Sultan would approve of it. I don't know whether this is typical of all absolute monarchies or one-man governments, but my guess is that it probably is. Government officials at a lower level—and that includes ministers—always find it easier to say “No” to anything you want because saying “Yes” would involve going to the Sultan and getting his chop on it. He dealt with all kinds of matters, some of them seemingly of lesser importance than others. So you never knew whether a minister or other official would think that he had the authority to deal with the

issue or whether he was going to have to go to the Sultan. I think that they were reluctant to go to the Sultan, unless they knew that the matter was something that he would like to be brought in on. So the government tended to be difficult to move, although the officials were very polite and, I think, wanted to be helpful in many circumstances—or most of them did. It was just hard to get things moving. But if a question were important enough, you'd take it up with the Sultan.

I tried to save the Sultan for really important matters and not go to the well too often, lest I should drop my pot and break it. That meant telling those who had questions—American interests of one kind or another—to be patient and try to work things out at the lower level. Eventually, with patience you could do this, but it took time. You knew—or you felt it in any case—that the minister or other official with whom you were dealing was probably going to have to take this matter up with the Sultan. And you were going to have to wait and be patient. So you had to choose the issues to take to the highest level. I did that. It meant exercising patience and getting other people to be patient—getting our military and business firms to be patient.

Oman has money. It has oil. It is not fabulously wealthy, like the United Arab Emirates or Saudi Arabia, but it has money. The Sultan is very much interested in developing and modernizing the country, so there's business to be done there. There were a lot of US firms who were interested in doing business in Oman. They sometimes would encounter obstacles and roadblocks which were normal in Oman but which were very frustrating to American businessmen. I would occasionally have to tell them, “Well, take it easy. If you don't win this one, you'll win the next one.”

Foreign companies operating in Oman—it is not a uniquely Omani practice—were required to have an Omani partner or sponsor. This basically meant somebody whom you paid to represent you.

Q: It's true in Saudi Arabia.

BOEHM: It's true all over the place. The sponsors tend to be well placed. They were successful, wealthy Omanis. I think that the system makes sure that you get taken care of this time and the other guy gets taken care of the next time. If you happen to have the wrong sponsor for this project, he might turn out to be the right sponsor for the next one. [Laughter] When you have people like Senator D'Amato, for example...

Q: Go public and expose...

BOEHM: ...charge that a relative of the Sultan is on the take, you're going to have problems.

Q: Senator D'Amato is the Republican Senator from New York. He is sort of a joke, really.

BOEHM: Whether he's a joke or not, in his efforts to help a New York firm, he was threatening to make accusations of that kind, involving a member of the Omani royal family. He was threatening to accuse and expose this man on the floor of the Senate. I said, “For God's sake, this is the worst possible thing that you could do. It isn't going to get them the contract. It's going to rule them out of all future contracts which they could get.” Well, it turned out eventually that Senator D'Amato did not go public, and the company did land a nice contract about six months later. [Laughter]

Q: Were there any other particular problems outside of the normal desire to get more from our military who visited Oman?

BOEHM: Would you repeat that question?

Q: Did you have any major problems during this period with the American military?

BOEHM: No, I don't think so. Of course, the European Command [EUCOM] was interested [in Oman] because sometimes they had to supply assets for one reason or another. However, the Command which had authority in the area in the event of military action

was the Central Command, which was commanded by the famous General Norman Schwarzkopf. I had gone down to their Florida headquarters, of course, to be briefed by them before I went to Oman—long before, when I first thought that I was getting my appointment.

I had always made it crystal clear, the older and more crotchety I got, that when it came to United States activities in the country to which I was the ambassador, I was the boss. They seemed to accept that. They seemed to understand that I could get the things that we needed, if they'd just let me work and do it. It would take some time, of course. A good example was certain construction projects. The way it worked in Oman was that, since we were planning to use Omani air bases, when necessary, and since the United States really doesn't operate too well on a bare base footing, we like to have things all over the place. Some things are really necessary, like fuel for airplanes. Other things are not that necessary, like recreation facilities and that sort of thing. In any case, we had a very ambitious military construction program in Oman of warehouses in which to store equipment, fuel dumps, and that kind of thing. Getting [such construction projects] through the procedures in Oman and getting these things built could be difficult.

At that time the Omani Air Force was commanded by Air Marshal Erik Bennett, an Anglo-Irishman who had been there for many years and who was determined that Omani sovereignty should always be very clear. This sometimes caused difficulties for things that we wanted to do. He was the main contact on all of these projects, because they involved Omani air bases, which were his. So he was able to frustrate projects he didn't like, or to insist that some of the construction be usable by the Omani Air Force. Real or potential use by the Omani Air Force.

Sometimes these projects looked as if they were going to be of much more use to the Omani Air Force than to the U. S. Air Force. We had people in Congress—Congresswoman Pat Schroeder, for example—who was on the Military Construction Subcommittee—and who watched all of this stuff very closely. Congress wanted to be sure

that this money was used for construction in connection with U. S. military activities. Air Marshal Bennett, a British officer who had been seconded as commander of the Omani Air Force, was equally determined that Oman was going to get some value out of these facilities. [Laughter] He was ruthless. He would block things until he got what he wanted. I had to deal with Erik. It was fun, sparring with him. He was a very shrewd guy—a delightful man. I enjoyed the struggle with him. At times I just had to go over his head to the Sultan.

Q: Can you give your evaluation of the Sultan?

BOEHM: Yes.

Q: Who was he and so forth?

BOEHM: The Said family is a 200-year-old dynasty which has ruled Oman or Muscat for generations. Oman was once two things: it was the Sultanate of Muscat and the Imamate of Oman. The Imamate of Oman was a theocratic state which included most of present-day Oman outside of Muscat. Early on in the history of the Said dynasty the Sultan of Muscat had acquired or colonized a good part of East Africa, including Zanzibar and what is now the coast of Tanzania and Kenya. So they were a colonial power in the Indian Ocean area. At times the Sultan of Muscat would manage to take over the Imamate of Oman, so that he would be both Imam of Oman and Sultan of Muscat. Well, there had been a vacancy in the Imamate of Oman for quite some time. At the end of that phase they were separate: there was an Imam of Oman and there was the Sultan of Muscat. There was a war, which led to the conquest of the Imamate of Oman by Sultan Said of Muscat —the father of the present ruler, Sultan Qaboos. Said unified the country with a lot of help from the British.

During the 19th century the Sultanate of Muscat, which included Zanzibar and a lot of East Africa, had split because of a contest between two brothers. One of them got Zanzibar,

and the other one got Muscat, and they lost most of the rest of East Africa. But there was the Sultan of Zanzibar and a separate Sultan of Muscat.

At that time, long before oil was discovered, Zanzibar was richer than Muscat. Zanzibar had cloves—and slaves as well.

Q: We had a treaty [with Zanzibar] going back to, what, 1832?

BOEHM: Yes. I forget the exact date. We had an early treaty with Zanzibar.

Q: One of our earliest treaties, under President Andrew Jackson.

BOEHM: In fact, that treaty dated back to the period before the split, when the Sultan of Muscat also had Zanzibar. But they split. By the time that Muscat acquired the rest of Oman, they had lost Zanzibar and their East African territories. This is the history—over the last few hundred years—of what is today the Sultanate of Oman. After the unification of the two territories, it was called the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman. They gradually dropped the word “Muscat” to indicate the unity of the country and the extinction of the Imamate of Oman. This happened fairly recently.

Q: I used to see the Imam of Oman quite frequently because his residence was always at the Majelis of Saud bin Jiluwi of the Eastern Province [of Saudi Arabia] back in the 1950's. He used to sit there with his Omanis and glower. [Laughter]

BOEHM: You're absolutely right. And there was another relative—of the last ruling Imam of Oman who is today the Grand Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman. He is sort of a cricket-like, spry old guy. [Laughter] So I think that the period of the Imamate [of Oman] is finished. That isn't to say that tribalism no longer exists. There was a big tribal element involved there, too.

Anyway, you were asking me about the recent history of Oman and how the Sultan achieved his position. His father was a very old-fashioned man who kept Oman tightly

closed. Until 25 years ago—and that's very recent, after all, in historic terms—the city gates of Muscat would be closed at sundown. Nobody could come or go. People were not allowed out on the street at night without carrying a lantern, so that everybody could see who was out there. He had taken a dislike to umbrellas. Nobody could walk along with an umbrella. I think that he wanted to be able to sit on the balcony and see everything. [Laughter] He liked Salalah, the capital of the Southern Province. He didn't go to Muscat, the capital of Oman, for the last 20 years of his reign. He was becoming increasingly hermit-like and anti-modern: no automobiles, no schools, and no roads. Oman was a very primitive place.

But he did do one thing: he sent his son to England to be educated. There are these English families—very often ministers and teachers and their wives—who take in or board foreign princes and wealthy young men. That was done with the present Sultan. He had lived with an English family for a number of years. Then, when he finished his schooling, he went to Sandhurst [Royal Military College, Sandhurst], the British West Point, and graduated. He then served for a year or two with the British Army of the Rhine, as an officer in the British Forces in Germany. So he had that background.

Then he went back to Oman. His father called him back to Oman, where he was put under lock and key, more or less house arrest, in Salalah, in one of his father's palaces. An uncle of his, a brother of the Sultan, was a modernist. His name was Prince Tarik. He had actually left the country and gone into exile because you couldn't be a modernist in Oman at that time. At a given moment it was time for the old man to go. He was running the country into the ground, and it was time for a change. There was a palace coup d'etat. The old Sultan was thrown out and packed off to spend his years of exile—which weren't very long—in London. He died a few years later. The son, who was the only child of the old Sultan, became the new Sultan. His uncle, Prince Tarik, returned from exile and became Prime Minister. Oman began a modernization process, in the hands of a modern man, the young man who was British-educated...

Q: And a British officer.

BOEHM: Who had lived in Europe and had modern ideas. He set about modernizing the country, at the very moment, luckily, when the oil revenues were beginning to come in and he had some money. So Oman began to modernize. It's now well equipped with roads and schools. It has a university and good hospitals. It provides medical services to the rural areas of the country. It is a modernizing country that is doing well in that respect.

So that's the Sultan. In connection with the annual Human Rights Report, Oman is a country which, in my view, has a decent respect for human rights. The record is not perfect, but neither do we have a perfect record. But our human rights crowd in Washington tends to equate human rights with electoral, Jeffersonian democracy. Oman does not have a Jeffersonian democracy. So they regard that as a violation of human rights. It's always a struggle with the Department every year, in connection with this unfortunate Human Rights Report which we keep putting out, giving everybody around the world a report card, sticking our noses into places where we shouldn't be. We seem to think that we know better than anybody else what system they should have. Of course, as a loyal Foreign Service Officer, I carried out my instructions. My own conclusion was that the system that they have in Oman was one that the people were comfortable with. They accepted it. It was not our system of democracy, but it was their system, which involves a lot of sitting down and talking, with wise, older heads giving advice and consensus-building and all of that. That's the way it works out there on the Arabian Peninsula.

The Sultan uses that system. He's the ruler, all right. He makes the decisions, but those decisions tend to be accepted by everybody that I could find. I didn't see any signs of serious disaffection with the political system. The Sultan himself feels that, as time goes by, there should be increasing, popular participation in government. So you now have an elected, Council of State, an advisory body which can deal with the ministries, call the ministers in, get them to report on what they are doing, and criticize them if it wants to. And it happened that the first meeting of this Council of State was televised. It had succeeded

an older Council of State which had fewer powers and which was chosen on a different basis. The new Council criticized some of the ministers. It doesn't have the power to call in certain ministers, like the Minister of Defense or the Minister of Foreign Affairs. It can call in any of the other ministers—transportation and education, for example—put them on the line and say, “Why haven't you built that school?”

So when the Council of State began calling in ministers—it had just met for the first time—they were giving them what for. They said, “You promised to put telephones in my town, in my district. You never did. When are you going to do it?” The first time I saw the Sultan after this, he was still chuckling. He had watched this process on television. He was delighted at the way his ministers had been called down and subjected to the scourge of a political body. He told me that he intended to continue along those lines. The then new structure of the consultative council, or Majlis As-Shura, as it was called, was only a transitional phase. In turn, it was going to be succeeded by another body, which would represent a further opening to popular participation involving an electoral process.

Q: Did he ever use you as a sounding board? The American Ambassador is outside the normal give and take, unlike the British, who have been there a long time. He is somebody you can bounce ideas off without having to get too involved. Did you ever find that?

BOEHM: I wouldn't put it that way. I must say that I found my meetings with him always interesting. They were usually one on one. When I first got to Oman, he would tend to have the Foreign Minister or other note takers present for meetings with me. To my pleasure, he dropped that and began to meet with me privately, which meant that I could speak much more openly about certain things—especially if I was having some problem with a part of the government. The Sultan liked it that way, too, so during the bulk of my stay there we met privately. He has a very lively mind. He is interested in everything.

I wouldn't say that he used me as a sounding board or as a source of comment on the ministries. He clearly wanted my opinions and, once in a while, my advice on matters involving Omani-American relations.

Q: Before we go to the operations of the Gulf War, one further question. You mentioned human rights. Did you get involved in, or what was the role of women there?

BOEHM: You would get different opinions from different people. If you asked the National Organization for Women in the United States, they would say that the role of women in Oman is awful and totally unacceptable.

Q: You're talking about the American organization.

BOEHM: Yes. On the other hand, if you asked the King of Saudi Arabia, he would say, “Much too liberal.” [Laughter] Again, [the answer to your question] is comparative. As the Gulf goes, Oman is certainly one of the more enlightened countries on the scale when it comes to women. There are as many women as men at the university, and not all of them are studying home economics. They're studying chemistry, physics, and architecture. Women can drive automobiles. Not only can they drive, but anyone who's been anywhere else in the Gulf would be startled to see that they can take driving lessons from a male instructor, with just the two of them in the car.

Oman, as I said, is on the liberal end of the scale. There are many women who remain quite conservative, especially among the tribes in the rural areas who still wear a kind of mask. It's not a veil. It's a leather mask that covers the nose and eyes and perhaps the top of the mouth. Not a veil. It serves the same purpose. They wear the mask voluntarily, not only because their husbands want them to. There's no legal requirement to be veiled. Oman is a country which, until very recently was quite traditional, as I described it before. Many women—I think, by choice—continue to live in a rather conservative and traditional way. However, and especially among the wealthy, they send their daughters, as well as

their sons, abroad to school. Many of them go to the United States—or England. When the girls come back, you see them running around in Muscat in blue jeans. They water ski and so forth. So a woman can be modern if she wants to be. I think that this situation is coming along. They're doing a good job at modernization, taking it as fast as they can but without outraging the general conservative feelings of the population.

Q: Coming now to the Gulf War, you arrived in Oman in 1989. Maybe my dates are wrong, but wasn't it August 1 or 2, 1990, when, pretty much to the surprise of everyone, although there had been rumblings of trouble, Iraq invaded Kuwait and took it over. How did that hit you and what happened?

BOEHM: Well, it hit me the same way as everybody else—on CNN.

Q: This is the broadcasting station.

BOEHM: I hope that all of our listeners will know what CNN is. It's the Cable News Network which broadcasts globally via satellite. When I called on the Foreign Minister, he had on a television set, with CNN on all the time. [Laughter] That was true all over the place. It was a principal source of news for chanceries and foreign ministries all over the world. Anyway, that was how I learned of the invasion.

The crisis had been building up. Iraq was reported to be massing troops on the Kuwaiti border and had certainly been making threatening noises against Kuwait for quite some time, having to do with oil prices and oil quotas and the fact that Iraq for many years had claimed that Kuwait was a province of Iraq. There was a longstanding dispute on that, but the proximate cause was OPEC [Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries], oil production, and Kuwait's unwillingness to keep the price of oil up by limiting production. There had been meetings. The Iraqis and Kuwaiti had met in Saudi Arabia. There were various reports on whether that meeting did or didn't succeed. It appeared not to have succeeded. Other Gulf and Arab leaders were traveling around, trying to make the

situation simmer down. The Kuwaiti were whistling in the dark—the Kuwaiti Ambassador in Muscat, anyway, on whom I called to ask how he saw the situation.

Q: How did the Kuwaiti see the situation? I understand that they were not really liked in the Arab world.

BOEHM: They're very unpopular, especially in Oman. Let me recall to you that this was of interest to the US. After Oman signed the military access agreement with the United States in 1980, Kuwait moved to expel Oman from the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC], which consists of six states. Kuwait was the leader of the pack denouncing Oman. Oman, moreover, had never broken relations with Egypt when Egypt and Israel recognized each other at Camp David. Oman was one of only two Arab states that didn't break relations with Egypt. So Oman has always been willing sort of to do its own thing. Kuwait had been among the most active critics of Oman. So the Omanis had a good reason for not liking Kuwait. The Kuwaiti were generally unpopular anyway.

Q: Too much money and...

BOEHM: Too much money and too flashy, pushy, and domineering style. I remember talking to the Kuwaiti Ambassador. There had just been a visit to Baghdad by some major figure from the Gulf. This had been followed by rosy forecasts of the future. When I called on him, the Kuwaiti Ambassador told me that there was no problem any more. It was all settled, sort of. A few days later, Wham! Iraq had walked into Kuwait. But I didn't kid the Kuwaiti Ambassador about his bad prediction.

So, anyway, there we were. The Iraq forces took over Kuwait in a very short time and these horror stories began coming out of Kuwait. But President Bush decided—and a very good thing that he did—that, “This will not stand.” The idea then was to mobilize the UN and anybody else who could be mobilized to get Iraq out of Kuwait. The Iraqis were

showing no signs of getting out, and we decided that we were going to have to go to war. This required, of course, a lot of logistics.

Q: This is exactly what the agreement between the US and Oman was all about.

BOEHM: Precisely. That was what the access agreement was for. This was what the Sultan said when we went to him. Dick Cheney, then Secretary of Defense, made a swing through the area. He'd been preceded by Paul Wolfowitz, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, who was sent right out to the Gulf to tell the various countries what we needed and how we planned to carry out this operation. This initially involved, as you recall, Operation Desert Shield, leading up to Operation Desert Storm.

Q: Desert Shield was basically to build up our forces in the area and also to protect Saudi Arabia.

BOEHM: It was intended to serve both purposes. Wolfowitz went around the Gulf and he told the various countries—Oman and the others whose territory we wanted to use—where we wanted to put things and roughly how much we wanted to put there, as well as what we wanted to do.

He came down to Oman. The Sultan was then in Salalah, in his summer capital in the southern part of Oman. We went down there and called on him. Wolfowitz made his pitch to the Sultan, who agreed. He understood these things very well. He had been a military officer. The Sultan approved of virtually everything that we wanted to do. Then Wolfowitz went on his way.

Q: Initially, was there any wavering on the part of the Omanis?

BOEHM: No.

Q: The issue was there, and they knew what...

BOEHM: They knew what Iraq had done. They didn't like it and were glad to see that somebody was prepared to do something about it. They couldn't do anything themselves. They were fully cooperative from the very outset. They said, “Yes, fine. Yes, good.” There was a Gulf military structure in which Oman had some forces. It was stationed in Saudi Arabia. The Omanis had some troops up there, which eventually got involved in Desert Storm. They couldn't get involved in the air campaign because they didn't have aircraft that could go that distance. They stayed out of the air war but participated in the ground war. Omani troops were among the first [coalition] troops into Kuwait City.

After the Wolfowitz visit we flew back to Muscat that day. It was late at night by then—probably midnight. Our aircraft were going to land in Oman in about two hours. [Laughter] They were on the way. We had to scramble very hard, but I had a lot of very able and bright military guys on my staff. So at midnight they contacted the necessary Omani military, formed a coordinating committee, and told them, “Here is what's coming in in a half hour. So we'll put these aircraft at this field and those others at that airfield.” It was a marvelous show. They handled it very, very well. Both the Omanis and our people worked very well together. It went smoothly.

Then Secretary of Defense Cheney followed with his own visit to the area at which he discussed matters at a policy level and not so much the specifics of the military operations. This visit was also a sort of tip of the hat to the Gulf rulers, who had already received Under Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz and now received the Secretary of Defense. Secretary Cheney made two visits, as I recall. This was his first visit. He made another visit later on. So Oman was right in there, cooperating very, very well.

Q: Were there any particular strains in this situation? Sometimes when we come in, we come in big and...

BOEHM: No. Our people behaved themselves extraordinarily well. They were almost entirely from the U. S. Air Force, but we had lots of U. S. Navy visits. We had Marines all

over the place—mostly offshore. But they'd get shore leave in Oman. We had all kinds of military people and very little trouble. On those occasions when somebody might get drunk or break down hotel doors, the Omanis were very understanding. They'd just hand them over to us, and we'd pay for whatever damage there was. [Laughter] There were no problems. Everything went very smoothly, indeed. Our military were very sensitive. I had them all call on me, or I'd go and visit them. I visited the Marines. We had something like 20,000 Marines at one point. I went out and toured the fleet. Some of the equipment which they had was fascinating—mind-boggling. I'd make a speech to the Marines and sailors on "why we fight," and that kind of stuff. I always told them the truth. I told them that oil had something to do with it. Washington didn't want to say that. They wanted to talk about a small country being beaten up by a big country. One time Secretary of State Baker publicly used the word, oil, but never again. I think that in Washington they decided that it was too crass to talk about that.

Q: Well, some people acted as though the fact that Saddam Hussein of Iraq might have wound up controlling most of the oil of the Middle East was not important. If we hadn't moved in, the Iraqis would certainly have taken over Saudi oil, which accounts for at least one-third of the world petroleum supplies.

BOEHM: Washington refused to talk about oil as a reason. In my view, there was no reason for this. The American people understood this anyway and are perfectly capable of understanding why oil was one of the objectives. For whatever reason—presumably, public relations reasons—Washington decided to base its public case on the principle of not accepting the bullying of a small country by a larger country. That was fine. Maybe it was better for the UN or whatever, rather than talking about oil. I didn't mind telling Marines and sailors that oil had a lot to do with our being there. They understood that much better than they understood any other reason why we came to the defense of Kuwait.

You asked what problems we had. I said that we had no problems with our people, who were very well behaved. The Omanis were very helpful. Once in a while there would be an issue of Omani sensitivity on something. They didn't want too much use made of the main airport at Muscat. They preferred that other bases be used. We used the base at Muscat and had plenty of transport planes there. The Omanis didn't want fighter planes in Muscat, so we accepted that. We put aerial tankers—KC-135's mostly—at the main, civilian airport in the capital, and we put the other planes elsewhere. Once in a while our Air Force would gripe at the fact that they couldn't put any plane just anywhere. I didn't regard that as a serious problem, and it wasn't. We had that kind of detail problem once in a while. But there was great cooperation.

Q: At the end of the war, was the drawdown easy as far as our forces were concerned, or did we end up with a lot more there than...

BOEHM: No. It was easy. During the conflict, our people who came in—mostly from the Air Force—were housed in tents. They built tent cities, where most of them lived. We had pre-positioned supplies in Oman, as I explained before, as part of the base agreement. We had brought in all kinds of material and pre-positioned it—replacement parts and everything. We used that. A lot of that stuff, in fact, was shipped North to our forces in Saudi Arabia. When the war ended, it was not so much a matter of getting out. It was a matter of replenishing, bringing stocks up to replace the stores we had used during the fighting.

Q: We won the war handily. We had allies, but basically it was a very impressive, American effort. It was considered that there was an extremely strong, military force in Iraq, which had just sort of won the Iran-Iraq War. We already had good relations with Oman, but I would have assumed that this would have added to America's prestige—the America can deliver type of thing.

BOEHM: It got everybody's attention, yes. [Laughter] Of course, General Schwarzkopf is a figure who knew how to project this image. He came down to Oman several times. He is a very engaging guy. I have read that his staff was terrified of him. Books are coming out, saying that he was a tyrant and all of that. I didn't find it that way, but, of course, I didn't work for him. I found him a very engaging and charming man. Just after the war ended, he made a farewell visit to Oman. I had invited something like 500 people to a reception in his honor. Each one wanted to have a photograph taken with him. He patiently posed with every one of them. They all got this picture to hand down to their great-grandchildren. I liked him very much and thought very well of him.

Our stock was already very high. Everybody knew that we were a very powerful country. This demonstration of the crushing power of the United States really impressed people. At the same time you have to recognize that we don't live there. We chose to project our power into that region of the world, for that purpose. However, just as we projected it, we can withdraw it or decline to project it. And the countries that are there, of course, have to take account of all of that.

So you have this problem with Iraq. What do you do about Iraq? You have Iraq and Iran. There was a lot of sentiment in favor of really punishing Iraq—almost putting it out of business as a country. However, Oman took a somewhat different view of it. They see the great weight of Iran up there—different, religiously. Shi'a Muslims instead of Sunni Muslims. They see Shi'a sympathetic with Iran in Iraq, particularly in southern Iraq. There are Shi'a in Saudi Arabia, near the Kuwaiti border.

Q: Up in Al Qasim province.

BOEHM: So they see possible difficulties here. If Iraq is weakened too much, then you're going to have a lot of problems. So the Omanis didn't favor exterminating Iraq. They weren't terribly sympathetic to that. When they had to take positions which they thought

would be unpopular with Iran or Iraq or some other country, they liked to do that in unison with the GCC.

Q: The GCC is the...

BOEHM: The Gulf Cooperation Council, which consists of Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. They meet frequently at the foreign or defense minister level and occasionally at the chiefs of state level. They coordinate policies. On foreign policy issues that come up they try to [work out joint positions]. And they put out statements. If you [i.e., Oman] have to make a statement that is going to antagonize Iran or somebody else, you do it under the GCC rubric. [Laughter] And you don't say anything as a single state. That was the way it worked there. The Omanis were very happy to have that way of doing things.

Q: While you were there, what were the relations with Iran? Iran was the big neighbor.

BOEHM: Iran and Iraq both had ambassadors in Muscat, throughout the Iran-Iraq War. Of course, we didn't have relations with Iran at that time, so to me the Iranian Ambassador was a non-person. I ignored him. I had cordial relations with the Iraqi Ambassador until Iraq attacked Kuwait. Then, if someone brought him to a party, I'd turn away. I wouldn't shake hands with him.

Oman had and wanted to have as good relations as possible with everybody. They had regular contact with Iran. The Omani and Iranian foreign ministers were constantly visiting each other. Likewise Oman, despite the Gulf War in which it participated—and it had given us the use of its bases—wanted to maintain the best possible relations with Iraq. Shortly after the war they didn't send their ambassador back to Baghdad, but they sent back junior officials to reopen the Omani Embassy in Baghdad. We didn't have anybody in Baghdad, of course. So Oman tried to maintain relations with anybody who might threaten them,

which makes perfectly good sense. They conduct a very sound foreign policy in terms of their national interest, which isn't always the same as our national interest.

Q: Was there any sense that the Iranians were trying to stir things up in terms of the Shi'a community in Oman?

BOEHM: Well, not when I was there. There previously had been some history of that. There are very few Shi'a Muslims in Oman. The Shi'a community is well placed. It has been in Oman for hundreds of years, mostly in Muscat itself and the Muscat area more generally. The Shi'a are traders and businessmen. Most Omanis are neither Sunni nor Shi'a. They are Ibadhi Muslims, a small sect that emerged within Islam at a very early stage—even in the lifetime of Ali [cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad], I believe. It goes that far back. It's a very old sect. It is now regarded as the state religion of Oman. It is also found on a few islands off the coast of Tunisia. It is much closer to Sunnism than to Shi'aism.

As I say, there were a few Shi'a. They tended to be prosperous businessmen in the Muscat area. There had been some plotting among them. A few youths were arrested. This happened long before I got there.

Q: But they weren't able to affect the religious...

BOEHM: From within? No. Within Oman there was no problem of Shi'a insurgency or anything like that.

Q: Were there any problems with Saudi Arabia which you were involved with?

BOEHM: Well, Saudi Arabia in the Gulf is like the United States in the Western Hemisphere—big brother. It is so much bigger and is so much wealthier than the other countries. As is always the case when you have a small country next to a big, powerful country—whether the United States and Mexico or Saudi Arabia and its small neighbors or

Luxembourg and Belgium—there is always a sensitivity and a sense of fending off and a tendency to see the worst in the big neighbor, as well as a suspicion that they might want to push you around. Saudi Arabia inevitably occupies that position in the Gulf. They can't help it. Oman is no exception in this respect.

Again, the Sultan holds the view, as he did with Yemen, that he needed to settle the border. He had done it with Yemen. He had to give something away. He had said, “It's worth it. Instead of having another hundred years of bickering, let's settle this issue. I'll give something for that.” So he did.

He reached a settlement with Saudi Arabia. They had an unmarked border. The Empty Quarter runs through there. As you get over toward the border with the United Arab Emirates, the border gets very fuzzy. There is a long history of fighting there.

Q: Yes, involving Buraimi Oasis and...

BOEHM: It's right there. So the Sultan settled that border. I don't know whether they have yet signed that agreement. He was also settling the border with the Emirates. There are seven of them. They all are autonomous or at least semi-autonomous areas. Some have borders which are scattered around in little enclaves in Oman. So they have border problems, but the Sultan is determined to settle these things peacefully—and generously. He's ready to give something to get these borders settled.

Oman, by the way, has that little piece of non-contiguous land there, the Musandam peninsula, which sticks out into the Gulf of Hormuz and controls one side of the straits at the mouth of the Persian Gulf. This is another reason why Oman is an interesting place to serve.

Q: After the Gulf War was over, were there any other issues left over?

BOEHM: Yes. James Baker, President Bush's Secretary of State, hoped that the outcome of the war against Iraq would provide a promising opportunity for getting to the Arab-Israeli problem and getting it settled. He launched an exercise aimed at that. The object then was to get as many Arab countries as possible to agree to participate. That led eventually, I think, to the Israeli-PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] settlement. That was what Secretary Baker was then working on. Oman was one of the first to say, “Sure, we'll participate.”

Then there was the question of what to do about the breakup of the Soviet Union. Again, the United States wanted to organize some kind of international effort. Oman stepped right up and was one of the very first to say, “Yes, we'll participate.” So it wasn't hard. The Omanis were forthcoming on these things.

Q: You left there when, in 1992?

BOEHM: I had arrived in October, 1989, and stayed in Oman for just over three years. I presented my credentials [in November, 1989], and then left just after midnight onNovember 1, 1992.

Q: I gather that what you're saying is that you had a particularly positive person there in the person of the Sultan.

BOEHM: Yes.

Q: How did you see the future of this? I mean, the Sultan is getting on in years now.

BOEHM: Well, he's not that old. He's 55 now, so one would expect that he would continue to rule there for quite some time. Obviously, we're all mortal, and at some stage there will be a change. At this point the Sultan does not have any heirs. There are no heirs of his blood. That is, he has no children. He has relatives, but there is no heir apparent or presumptive. Nobody has been designated as the heir. The question is, “What next?”

when the time comes. Nobody knows the answer. There are any number of people who could be considered, who are relatives of the Sultan. I think that there is generally an assumption that it will be a cousin, a first cousin or close relative—an uncle or whatever it might be. However, by the time the Sultan leaves the scene, I don't think that there will be any eligible uncles around. So it's not at all clear who or what will succeed.

Partly foreseeing this issue, how far will the Sultan have moved in the direction of establishing a democracy? Let's say he has set up a democracy in which the people and the legislature basically rule. Maybe this will make the question of a successor less important. Maybe you won't have a monolithic situation. Maybe the Sultan is thinking of that, as he makes changes in the political system. So it's not clear at all where this is going.

Q: You left Oman in 1992. Did you retire?

BOEHM: I retired from the Foreign Service the day I left Oman. [Laughter] I was ready. I was glad to retire and looking forward to it. Toward the end of my tour in Oman, the war was over, and I was 66 years old. I figured that it was time for me to get out of the Service. So I was glad to go.

I retired at once and have been doing nothing since but reading and traveling around. That's about it.

Q: Well, then, let's stop at this point.

BOEHM: That just about finishes me off unless you want some reflections on the Foreign Service.

Q: Why not? Let's talk about...

BOEHM: I've got to get back to my car before I get booted [a device is put on a front wheel of a car which has been parked longer than permitted]. Let's let it go.

Q: OK.

End of interview